Choose Your Words Carefully: The Electoral Consequences of the Speeches of American State Governors, 2000-2006

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Abstract

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This project analyzes the political ramifications of thousands of words spoken in 293 State of the State speeches by 99 governors in all fifty states between 2000 and 2006. I present evidence that the relative similarity of the language in these speeches to that Democratic or Republican Party platforms communicated a recognizable and salient political orientation that state electorates used to evaluate their governors. Consistent with the expectation of the "directional theory" of politics, governors who delivered strong signals consistent with the political orientation of the majority of voters had higher public approval ratings. Further, incumbents who delivered directionally-preferred speeches had higher vote shares and chances of reelection. The finding that the partisan signal in gubernatorial speech has an independent impact, one that supersedes that of fiscal policies, underscores the importance of symbolic politics for understanding public outcomes at the state level.

To my father

Acknowledgements

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Introduction: The Power of Words

> "The achievement of a particular result is therefore not ordinarily a major influence upon the continued incumbency of a leader or upon public restiveness or satisfaction though it may become so in rare cases of inflexibility or obtuseness. What counts normally is the affective response of political groupings in particular situations."
>
> - Murray Edelman *The Symbolic Uses of Politics* 1964, p. 74.

Speeches play a vital role in popular accounts of American political history: Ben Franklin's admonition that "We must all hang together or, most assuredly, we will all hang separately" steeling the resolve of his fellow Founders to sign the Declaration of Independence from Britain, George Washington's farewell speech setting a precedent that would stand for over a century of a president seeking no more than two terms, Daniel Webster's oratory forestalling civil war, Lincoln establishing himself on the national scene in his debates with Stephen A. Douglas and then summing up in 272 words in the wake of the Union's victory at Gettysburg all of the aspirations of his young nation, the "Crosses of Gold," "all we have to fear is fear itself," "ask not what your country can do for you," "it is morning in America." Does oratory play a vital role in changing the course of American history? Or do we venerate these speeches simply because they encapsulate the spirit of a moment and in spite of the fact that they have no true role in influencing subsequent events?

Whether language matters independently to political outcomes is the research question at the heart of this work. Rather than analyzing the oratory of presidents or

senators, I examine the speeches of governors. This is in part because they almost all deliver "State of the State" addresses in each year which affords great empirical leverage to test theories of political communication due to the large number of contemporaneous speeches that share a common set of conventions. More importantly, these state executives are becoming increasingly important public leaders within our political system as the populations of the American states swell to the tens of millions, states take on greater administrative responsibilities in the wake of devolution, and rapidly accelerating immigration, skyrocketing health care costs and decaying infrastructure magnify the challenges that governors must lead their states in facing and in overcoming. Finally, the governor's office has become, in the modern era, the proving ground of presidents. As of 2008, former American state governors had held the office of the presidency for twenty-eight of the previous thirty-two years. Can governors influence, through the words choices in their speeches, their own political fortunes and the directions of their states? In aiding the rise to prominence of these political leaders, can these words change the course of American history?

A Democrat from Wyoming

In the 2002 gubernatorial election in the state of Wyoming, Democrat Dave Freudenthal narrowly defeated Republican businessman Eli Bebout. This result was surprising in part because Bebout was the favored candidate but also because forty-two percent of the citizens of Wyoming claimed membership in the Republican Party in this year while only nineteen percent self-identified as Democrats.[1] In 2006, the gubernatorial election

[1] According to the CBS/New York Times survey for that year; an updated measure of partisan identification originally introduced in Erikson, Wright and McIver (1985). The remaining 39% identified as independents.

was a landslide, but again Freudenthal was the victor defeating his Republican opponent Ray Hunkins who received only thirty percent of the vote.

Though we often observe long periods of single-party dominance of state legislatures – the Democrats have not had outright control of either house of the Wyoming state legislature since 1966 – state governorships frequently change hands between majority and minority party within a state. In fact, when Freudenthal's predecessor Jim Geringer took office in 1995, it was the first time that a Republican had been governor of Wyoming in twenty years. Remarking on this incongruity Erikson, Wright and McIver, in their seminal work *Statehouse Democracy*, speculate that,

> "Where unusual long-term success for a party is found at the gubernatorial level (e.g., Utah for the Democrats, Michigan for the Republicans), this may result precisely because of gubernatorial leadership that is ideologically atypical for the party." (199

What aspect of Dave Freudenthal's leadership, though, is atypical and is he uncommon in a way that is typical other successful minority party governors?

One place to start the task of understanding the tenure of governors is to turn to the texts of the public addresses in which they articulate their policy goals, their political aspirations and their personal philosophies. Like most other governors, Dave Freudenthal delivered at the beginning of each calendar year of his term a "State of the State" speech similar to a presidential State of the Union speech. The context and conventions for these addresses will be described in greater detail in the following chapter. In his first such address in 2003, this Democratic governor of Wyoming began by delivering an invocation:

> "Upon us has been bestowed the opportunity to serve. To serve and to strengthen our citizens, our economy and the Wyoming community is our task – may the heavens guide our steps."

He then proceeded to deliver a relatively technocratic speech laying out his priorities in terms appropriate for someone who had been state budget director: "Allowing for the five-percent budget reserve account, our proposed current expenditures and anticipated revenues essentially balance." This is consistent with the national Republican Party's rhetorical focus, examined in depth in the following chapters, on fiscal matters and the institutions of governance. Freudenthal's choice of words also appears in conflict with the traditional Democratic preference for public-sector solutions to problems (Erikson, MacKuen and Stimson 2002) as he described his proposal that, "The Energy Commission itself should be modified to be a private sector commission." Further, his claim that, "I also support a stronger voice and role for the travel/tourism industry within our economic development efforts," at least sounds more consistent with the pro-business rhetorical agenda of the Republican Party. One response to the question of how minority party governors are successful, therefore, is that they can aid their fortunes by adopting the language of the majority party in the state and since gubernatorial elections are competitive between the parties, the delivery of a signal of political alignment with the majority may be necessary even for majority party governors.

As with any serious analysis of public life, though, an evaluation of the relationship between the speech of governors and the behavior of state publics has additional levels of complexity. The general theories articulated above, for example, are agnostic as what type of majority party language it is advantageous for governors to employ. Should they deliver speeches that identify them as similar to the median voter who will, by definition, be on the side of the majority, or should they employ language that strongly stimulates this majority by delivering a strong oratorical signal consistent with a popular policy position? Or should

they avoid taking partisan stances entirely? Along what spectrum can governors stake out these positions? Further, what evidence do we have from analyses of other actors within the political system that speech has political implications? Chapter Two addresses these questions in detail reviewing the theoretical preconditions necessary for speech to have an impact on the political fortunes of state executives.

In order to understand how speech impacts public outcomes requires a measure of a salient set of quantifiable characteristics of these addresses. There are, after all, many aspects of speeches: substantive policy content, political framing devices, rhetoric and metaphor, even humor and delivery. In this work, I focus on one basic quantifiable element: the word choices of governors and the extent to which these word choices mirror those within national party platforms. I generate a set of point estimates of the "partisan signal" in gubernatorial speech using a tool called "Wordscores" (Laver, Benoit and Garry 2003; Martin and Vanberg 2008). In Chapter Three, I walk the reader through the computations at the heart of this method of quantitative content analysis and place it within the context of other such analyses that have aided scholars in their examinations of texts for the past several decades.

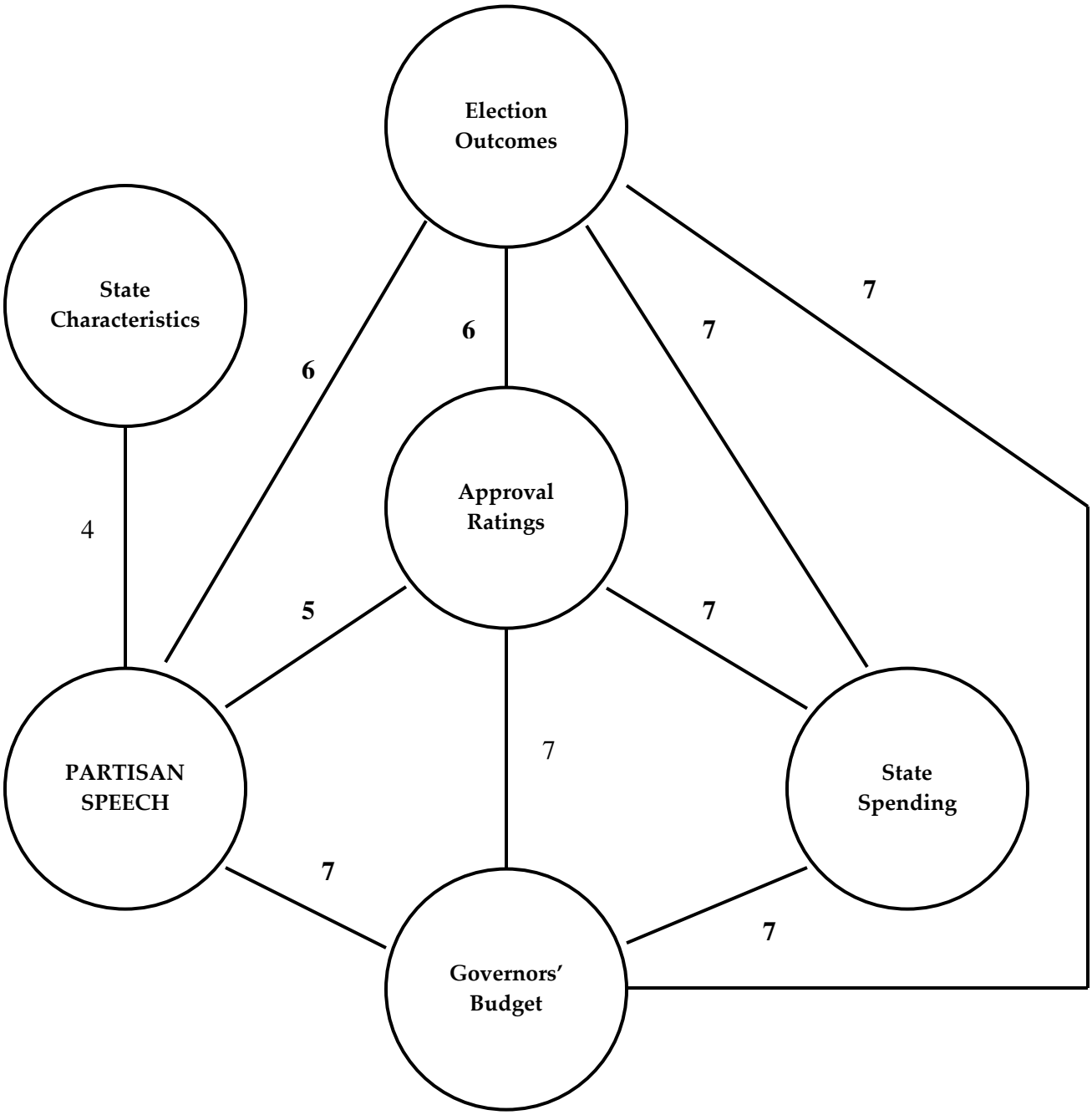
Are these Wordscores a plausible method of content analysis that produces results that are consistent with basic expectations that link them with their larger political context? For example, is the average placement for Republicans more Republican than the average for Democrats? Are Wordscores for speeches in states where the majority of voters identify as members of the Democratic Party more Democratic than those delivered by governors within states in which majorities identify as Republican? Whereas it is certainly possible that Wordscores could be a valid method without producing such results, it would be highly

surprising to find that Republican governors' language has more in common with the platforms of the national Democratic Party. Chapter Four examines the connection between the partisan signal within these speeches and the context in which they are delivered.

Figure 1 on the following page is a schematic model that summarizes the interrelationships between the different pieces of this larger puzzle. Each circle contains a different aspect of the state political environment from the nature of these speeches, to gubernatorial approval, to the fiscal policies that governors recommend and over which they preside. The number next to each of the lines that connects these figures is that of the chapter that focuses on these specific relationships.

As shown in Figure 1, Chapter Five begins the central empirical analyses of this work. The phenomenon of interest within this chapter is gubernatorial public approval ratings. Building on past literature which analyzes the implications both of governors' and of presidents' speeches, this chapter lays out the case for why we might expect the partisan signal of speech to impact public outcomes. It also operationalizes the divergent expectations of different theories of position-taking by explaining how I use the Wordscores measure to create variables that test the hypotheses that follow from these theories. Is it most advantageous for governors in states in which a majority of citizens identify as Republican to choose language that closely reflects the moderate Republican orientation of the median voter (Downs 1957)? Or should governors in these states, whether they are Democrats or Republicans, send as strong a signal as possible on the side of the political majority consistent with the expectations of those scholars who have posited that politics are "directional" (Rabinowitz and MacDonald 1989)?

Figure 1: Partisan Speech, Fiscal Policy, Public Approval Ratings and Incumbent Vote Share among American State Governors, 2000-2006



Chapter Six builds upon this analysis to examine speech within the context of elections looking both at the determinants of incumbents' vote shares and the factors that influence the likelihood of their reelection. As with approval, the models incorporate variables that past research has shown to be important for understanding why governors win or lose elections. The effects that I am looking to discover are marginal effects over and above the impact of factors such as the economy, campaign finance, presidential approval and, in the case of the elections analyses, gubernatorial approval. The question that I attempt to answer within the context of this work is whether speech has a discernable independent effect on governors' political fortunes. Chapter Six also introduces an important wrinkle into the analysis. Experimental studies (Rahn 1993) suggest that politicians may not be able to profitably adopt the language of the opposite party since this may merely confuse voters making them less likely to pay attention to speech and other cues beyond the partisan identification of governors. Therefore, I examine whether minority party governors can improve their political fortunes by using words from the platforms of the opposing party.

Chapter Seven adds the actual policy behaviors of governors to the analysis. Up until this point, the focus has been on whether or not the partisan signal within governors' speech influences their approval ratings and reelection prospects. There are, however, at least two reasons why we may observe a relationship between partisan speech and public outcomes. On the one hand, the partisan signal in governors' speech that may be consistent with the partisan nature of their actions. In this case, if speech and policy are indistinguishable, then it would be difficult to assert that speech has a strong independent impact on public outcomes though it may be an important delivery mechanism for information about the actual substantive policy behaviors pursued by governors. If, on the other hand, speech and policy

are not consistent – if many governors, for example, deliver speeches highlighting their fiscal responsibility but actually increase state spending significantly – then the implications are quite different. Further, if speech has a discernable impact on approval and elections but policy does not, this raises important questions about accountability among governors. This may imply that symbolic politics dominates at the gubernatorial level, that citizens are not attuned to what governors actually do but rather to how they use partisan language to frame these actions. Chapter Eight draws the work to a conclusion summarizing the theoretical implications of what we have learned about the relationships mapped in Figure 1 above. It also discusses the implications of these findings for representation. In Edelman's terms, are citizens attuned to the "actual results" of governing or is there an "affective connection" between a public and its leaders nurtured by governors through their use of charged partisan language?

Though the famous speeches cited above are notable for more than the partisan signal delivered within their language, the fundamental question remains. Does it matter whether, in some objective sense, it was "morning in America" when former state governor Ronald Reagan declared it to be so in his speech to the Republican National Convention or was that phrase important only because of its affective appeal to the majority of Americans who subsequently supported him in the election in November of 1980? Did these citizens, therefore, sign on to Reagan's plan for what would occur during that "morning" mindless of the policy substance of that plan? Likewise, do citizens in the American states elect governors based, at least in part, due to the affective appeal of their language and – barring scandal or a significant economic downturn – are these governors then free to lead their states with whatever set of substantive policies they see fit to advance?

Chapter Two
Theory: Political Signals and Public Evaluations

This project is at its heart, therefore, a study of gubernatorial leadership, of what type of actions – and what manner of describing these actions – leads to reelection. Many studies of leadership by American state executives focus on the importance differing "formal powers" of state executives, such as their constitutionally designated roles in the budgetary process (Barrilleaux and Berkman 2003) and their possession of the line-item veto (Abney and Lauth 1997). Scholars have shown that these powers influence their success within the legislative process (Bernick and Wiggins 1991) and their control of state agencies (Brudney and Hebert 1987). Although early studies questioned the importance of political prowess and other informal powers that complement these formal powers (Bernick 1979), a near consensus has subsequently emerged that personal skills and characteristics are crucial to gubernatorial success and that they can amplify the effect of institutional powers (Ferguson 2006, 2003; Rosenthal 1990; Beyle 1996, 1992; Crew 1992). This may be a factor of the emergence of higher quality governors who are more effective public leaders for their states (Sabato 1978). Although there has been a wealth of excellent studies on the determinants of gubernatorial approval (e.g., Beyle, Niemi and Siegelman 2002) and gubernatorial elections (e.g., Niemi, Stanley and Vogel 1995), and groundbreaking studies on the role of gubernatorial speech in influencing public outcomes (e.g., Ferguson and Barth 2002, Coffey

2005), we still have a great deal to learn about the precise mechanisms and implications of the political communication of American state governors.

The importance of the tenor and content of major public addresses is emphasized in research on the speech of American national executives. Through the rhetoric in their States of the Union and in other major addresses, presidents have long pursued the strategy of "going public" (Kernell 1986) to muster support for their policy agendas. There are myriad consequences of this strategic political communication. Executive speech places policy issues on the public agenda (Cohen 1995), influences media coverage of and congressional attention to issues particularly within the domain of domestic policy (Edwards and Wood 1999), spurs action within administrative agencies (Whitford and Yates 2003), and increases the president's bargaining power (Canes-Wrone 2001, 2004) and legislative success (Barrett 2004). National executives, therefore, have strong incentives to tailor their speech in a manner that will appeal to the general public; delivering speeches targeted to a broad audience can lead to inclusive non-partisan approval gains (Ragsdale 1987). However, even presidents have begun to struggle to communicate effectively with the public in the wake of the decline of network television (Baum and Kernell 1999).

Gubernatorial Speech

Governors, like presidents, deliver speeches, some of which are of great length, others that are concise and to the point. The extent to which governors' personalities and leadership styles appear in their States of the State is striking. The longest such speech, Rod Blagojevich's address to the State of Illinois in January of 2004 swelled to 9,656 words, besting the next longest speech, that of George Pataki to the State of New York in the same

year, by over 1,000 words. Gettysburg Addresses these speeches are not. Pataki acknowledges this in the light-hearted opening to his 2004 speech:

> "It's exciting to be here today to deliver my 10th State of the State address. For those of you who have sat through the previous 9 hours and 46 minutes of my State of the State speeches, you know they tend to be long. I just want to make sure everyone is comfortable in their seats … Eliot, Alan, Senator Balboni, Secretary Daniels … is everyone comfortable? Because I may be here longer than you think."

Blagojevich's less genial oratory contains a 3,628 word screed that alone is longer than 83% of the rest of the speeches in this analysis and that is specifically directed at the Illinois State Board of Education. After holding forth at great length on this specific policy issue, he finally concludes with a flourish:

> "The idea of reforming the State Board of Education cuts across party lines. It transcends ideology, geography, ethnicity, and race. It resides with everyone who thinks our children deserve better. I think it's time we get started."

This section of the second address of his first term foreshadowed the bruising political turf warfare – abetted by an unpopular micromanaging leadership style and allegations of impropriety in state contracting – that would eventually eclipse his substantive policy goals during his second term.

The distinction of having given the shortest State of the State speech from 2000 to 2006 goes to M. Jodi Rell who delivered her first address to the State of Connecticut in 2005 after John Rowland, the man under whom she had served as lieutenant governor, resigned due to scandal. Her energy perhaps limited due to her having recently faced some serious health challenges she kept her remarks to a succinct 1,212 words. She nevertheless found the space, as a remarkable number of other governors also have, to include material that references the conventions and practices of State of the State speeches directly:

> "I remember watching Governor Bill O'Neill stride confidently into the chamber and up to this dais to deliver his State of the State speech. I was nervous for him. As I hid behind the shelter of my little desk, I kept thinking, 'How can he do this? How can he stand before all of us and calmly deliver his remarks?' My imagination was never so vivid, my political ambitions never so grand, to think that I would be standing before you 20 years later, nearly to the day, as the 87th Governor of Connecticut, delivering my first State of the State address."

Consistent with the tenor of this address, the citizens of her state widely perceived Rell as an effective and congenial caretaker in the wake of Rowland's ouster, and, during her first term, she enjoyed the highest average recorded approval ratings for a governor in Connecticut history.

Whether these remarks include extended passages about state-specific policy debates or passing thoughts about progress throughout one's own political career, this study suggests that the words that governors choose for their addresses have political consequences. Governors select thousands of words that together communicate a specific political orientation to their state electorates. The members of these electorates receive these signals and use them to evaluate governors in accordance with their method of processing information about politics. These evaluations, in turn, influence – alongside other considerations such as perceptions of the performance of the economy – responses to standard gubernatorial job approval surveys and behaviors within the voting booth on Election Day.

The idea that rhetoric has political implications has a clear intuitive appeal and squares with media narratives about the reasons for the waxing and waning fortunes of state executives as well as with governors' evaluations of the reasons for their own and their party's success. Adopting a metaphor from an earlier phase of his career, Governor Schwarzenegger chastened the Republican Party of California that they were "dying at the

box office" for failing to package their policy proposals using more moderate language (Martelle 2007). Quantifying the impact of speech on public outcomes, though, particularly in a manner which is valid across states and independent from substantive policy agendas, presents daunting theoretical and methodological challenges. The remainder of this chapter evaluates the necessary conditions for gubernatorial speech having an effect on election outcomes; the following chapter explains how we can measure political orientations within gubernatorial speech. As a complete articulation of the theories of position taking within political science as well as a comprehensive review of methods of quantitative content analysis are both subjects to which many books have been devoted, the discussion here is necessarily summary, and I will include references to other more comprehensive works on these topics whenever applicable.

Dimensions of Discourse

There are at least three important conditions if a particular set of word choices is to have an independent impact on political outcomes across states. First, there must be at least one dimension of discourse recognized by a significant subset of voters. This is to say that words must have generally accepted meanings and connotations within the contemporary political dialogue such that different combinations of words indicate well-recognized political orientations. A focus on "universal health care," for example, generally indicates a Democratic orientation, and, typically, Democratic Party identification. Second, there must be optimal position-taking strategies along this dimension. Third, there must be a mechanism through which the positions taken by these governors are transmitted to the public. I will proceed through each of these conditions in order.

It is crucial to note, though, that these strategies need not be pursued consciously by the governors who benefit from, or are put at a disadvantage by, them. Many governors in the modern era employ full-time speechwriters whose sole job it is to produce texts that position these politicians for electoral and policy success. However, the specific signal in their rhetoric may be a factor of a number of different mechanisms in addition to fully intentional goal-seeking behavior including electoral selection in which a governor's speech is primarily the result – rather than the cause – of electoral outcomes. I assume neither that the motivation of these politicians is the same, nor that they are equally aware of the positions they are taking; I merely examine the outcomes of their behavior. There are certainly cases in which these outcomes are byproducts – whether positive or negative – of signals that governors are not fully aware that they are sending.

There are many dimensions along which politicians send and voters receive signals. Most of these, though distinct in significant ways, are not wholly separable from the others either conceptually or empirically. In the section that follows, I will review three important dimensions: state- or politician-specific styles, policy-specific debates and the national political spectrum of partisan discourse.

The first dimension is the set of cues related to state-specific political language. It may be the case that attempting to examine word choice across states is a fruitless endeavor for two different reasons. First, the specific contours of the debate may be idiosyncratic to each state. For example, policy discussions and metaphorical constructs may pertain almost exclusively to the automobile industry in Michigan but to potato growing in Idaho. Second, the substantive policy content of these debates may be quite similar across states but the words used within these discourses are different. For example, most speeches may pertain

primarily to education but within these speeches governors reference the names of certain state policy entrepreneurs to signify the reforms these activists championed. Though scholars (e.g., Deerwester et al. 1990) have developed advanced tools to account for issues of synonymy – different words having the same meaning – and polysemy – the same word having multiple meanings – such analyses are beyond the purview of this current project, and these tools often lend themselves to the creation of data that is often not directly comparable across cases (Klebanov et al. 2007). The conceptual and statistical challenges are even more intractable if individual governors have personal speaking styles that overwhelm the common content of their speeches. If either the states or the governors are overly idiosyncratic, the methods described in the following chapter will not produce meaningful results and, indeed, it would be difficult to make any blanket statements about the power of a position-taking strategy along a common dimension.

The second set of dimensions is that of policy-specific debates. The following chapter includes more detail on the content of State of the State speeches, but a substantial portion of the words within these speeches pertain to specific policy areas, in particular to education (Coffey 2005). Examining any one of these policy-specific dimensions could be the most illuminating for understanding the implications of the words used in the speeches given by governors. The comprehensiveness of the study as it relates to examining all governors across states and time, though, would be limited somewhat because not all governors discuss all policy issues – not even education – in all of their speeches. Further, many of these substantive policy disagreements *are* related to state-specific matters. For example, the voters of Florida in 2002 amended their state Constitution to require that class sizes in schools have a hard cap on the number of students. Railing against this amendment

became a central portion of the speeches of Governor Bush for the remainder of his second term. In 2005, he was still lamenting the fiscal consequences of this amendment:

> "We've spent more than $2 billion on implementation so far. Next year, the figure will rise to $3.8 billion, and we're on track to spend $22.2 billion by 2010-11. Additionally, understandable reluctance to cancel art and music classes, to bus students, and to convert resource rooms to classrooms will require more construction, driving the actual cost to implement as high as $26.4 billion. Teachers make the difference. And we would serve our students better by focusing on attracting and retaining the quality teachers who can help them discover the world, rather than pushing class size reduction down to every class in every school, in every district throughout the state."

It is difficult to know whether Governor Bush was truly committed to increasing the state budget to raise pay for teachers across the board, a traditionally Democratic educational policy priority (Weinberg and McHugh 2007). In this case, though, his primary focus was on the attempt to roll back a specific policy change that required him to allocate state funds otherwise. In spite of the difficulties in drawing inferences from policy-specific debates, particularly across states and time, there is a great deal to be learned from examining both the personal speaking styles and policy-specific contours of gubernatorial speech. The focus of this project, however, will not be on what is unique about governors' speech but what these addresses may all have in common for, in addition to pertaining to state- and policy-specific matters, the word choices of gubernatorial speech may indicate an orientation along a national dimension of political discourse.

Much of recent and contemporary political scientific analyses are based on the observation that placing citizens and legislators within a uni- or low-dimensional space explains a great deal of the variation in political outcomes in the modern era of American politics. It is not obvious, however, exactly how that dimension developed and has retained its structure. There are psychological explanations for voters, as "cognitive misers" (Hurwitz

and Peffley 1987) having parsimonious belief systems that guide their political choices and to lead them to see the world in differing shades of "us" and "them." There are the institutions (Aldrich 1995; Rohde 1991) and the robust identifications (Campbell et al., 1960) of the two-party system in America that lead voters and politicians to exhibit behaviors that are highly structured within the context of a single dimension. Finally, this spectrum of conflict, at least during the Cold War era also had a salient substantive content, namely preference for more or less government intervention into the economy (Stimson 1991), though this does not imply that the positions of parties and politicians along this spectrum are entirely logical (Poole 2007) in the strict sense of this word.

It is beyond the purview of this project to adjudicate among competing theories that claim that this persistent dimension of political conflict is a factor primarily of institutional pressures created by party organization (Aldrich 1995; Rohde 1991) or of ideological conflict as it plays out within, for example, the structure of voting in Congress (Krehbiel 1993). Also, I do not intend to take issue with those who argue that there are many salient cleavages that explain vote choice in the American states (Jackson and Carsey 1999). My claim is that – perhaps only during this era when there were clearly perceived differences (Fiorina 2005) between two highly polarized parties at the national level that were increasingly competing along a unidimensional spectrum of political conflict (McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal 2006) – governors' choice of language associated with one of those national parties telegraphed a political orientation to voters in their state publics that, in turn, influenced the voting behaviors of the citizens within these states.

Left and right had meaning in America during this time, a meaning that both had ideological content, solid party attachment and that was associated with the use of specific

language. A review of the partisan frames on three crucial policies issues within *Newsweek* led Michael Wagner (2007) to conclude that the two parties, "provide increasingly internally homogenous, but externally competitive issue frames, [and] individuals are more likely to believe there is more than the proverbial 'dime's worth of difference' between the two major parties." I refer to this dimension as the national "partisan signal" of speech because, as I explain in greater detail in the following chapter, my measure of the political speech is anchored by the language in national party platforms. However, it is not parties alone that give this language its character. Further, it is important to note that the claim that there is a salient dimension of national partisan speech does not imply that each state level party is the same. Many Democrats in Alabama, for example, may react much more positively to the speech consistent with that of Republicans nationally. Testing this thesis of southern exceptionalism, in particular, is part of the analyses that follow.

A further confounding factor is that, although symbols, policies and parties all contribute to organizing American political conflict, it is clear is that in the American states, partisanship is not a synonym for ideology. A good deal of sorting has occurred in the American South, particularly in regards to voting for national candidates (Black and Black 2002), but it is still the case that the Arkansas and Mississippi legislatures remain dominated by Democrats and that the majority of survey respondents in these states still self-identify as Democrats. However, the ideology of these Democrats, whether operationalized as symbolic commitments or policy positions, is quite different than that of the Democrats of Massachusetts. Though state ideology is an extremely strong predictor of state partisanship, there have been and remain notable outliers (Erikson, Wright and McIver 1993). Another crucial distinction is that although state partisanship is highly variable over time even across

states, state ideology is extremely stable particularly in regards to across state comparisons (McIver, Erikson and Wright 2001).

This clear national dimension was abetted during this period by a number of factors that may make examination of political speech along this dimension less enlightening for other times. There were no significant third parties or third party candidates[2] during this time to draw the public dialogue towards multiple salient dimensions. There was also great stability in partisan presidential voting among the states during this time. Only two states, New Hampshire and New Mexico, switched in terms of their electoral votes, and two-party presidential vote among the states in 2000 explains 98 percent of the variation in voting outcomes in 2004. There were also salient issues that represented significant differences on these issues, perhaps most notably the issue of gay marriage. That Fiorina (2005) and Bartels (2006) spent so much time debunking the idea that states were divided into two warring camps representing different parties and ideologies is paradoxically a testament to the currency of this polar division in both elite and popular consciousness during this time.

Therefore, although state- or policy-specific factors may dominate the structure of gubernatorial word choice during other times, we have strong reason to believe that the national political dialogue is a salient dimension of discourse during this time. This is reflected in the texts of the speeches themselves. The word, "national" appears in 279 of the 293 speeches in this study (95%), and the policy issues that were at the heart of many governors speeches had become increasingly nationalized. Though the federal government has taken an active role in education policy since at least the administration of Lyndon B.

[2] Ralph Nader's third party candidacy was, of course, significant as it related to the apportionment of electoral votes from the state of Florida but he did not have a substantial popular following that activated an off-diagonal cleavage as did Ross Perot in the 1990s (McCann, Rapoport and Stone 1999).

Johnson, George W. Bush in 2001 again dramatically expanded the scope of federal involvement in education with his "No Child Left Behind" Act. This act is the frequent subject of gubernatorial discourse, and President Bush is referenced by name in 70 of the 293 speeches in this study (24%). In 2005, Dirk Kempthorne of Idaho had, in contrast to his counterpart in Illinois, kind words for his State Board of Education as well as for Bush's policy that, by that time, had come under a great deal of political fire out of concerns about overly stringent standards, inconsistent enforcement and inadequate funding:

> "Every state is working to follow federal legislation to ensure that no child is left behind when it comes to public education. It has not been a simple task, but I commend our State Board of Education, which has been aggressive in implementing No Child Left Behind."

Perhaps in part due to his enthusiastic support for Bush's policies, Kempthorne was appointed Secretary of the Interior soon after he delivered this speech.

Another national issue, the Iraq War, and the toll it took on state National Guards, is common topic of these speeches. The word "Iraq" appears in 94 of the 293 speeches in the study (32%) and "national guard" in 125 speeches (43%). Governor Janet Napolitano of Arizona acknowledged this explicitly in 2005.

> "Previous Governors have not had to talk about homeland security in state of the state addresses, but we know these are not ordinary times. Three years ago America was attacked by terrorists who still plot to do us harm. Two years ago we went to war."

If there is indeed a salient dimension of national political discourse during this time that is also present in the speech of governors, then governors' choices of ideologically-loaded words that indicate a placement along this spectrum will have political consequences. The following chapter describes the method for measuring these placements. The section that follows articulates competing theories of which expressed orientations are the most electorally advantageous.

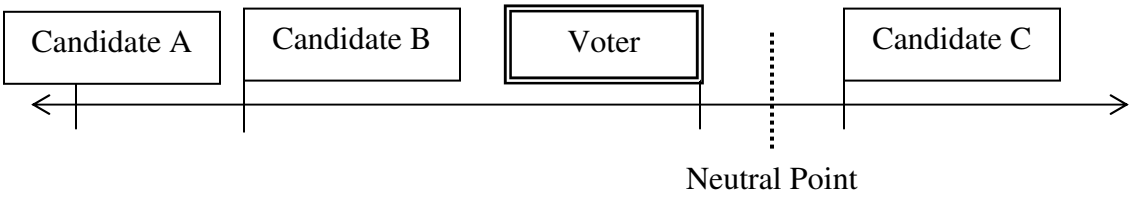
Position-Taking Strategies

Should governors seeking reelection hew closely in their use of language to the political orientation of the average person in a state? Or should they attempt to stimulate the majority by taking extreme stances on popular issues? For many years, the assumption was that, in general terms, candidates should choose the policy position or political orientation that was the most proximate to voters in the middle of the political spectrum. Anthony Downs in his *Economic Theory of Politics* (1957) introduce this "median voter theorem" that has been refined by many scholars over the years (e.g., Davis, Hinich, and Ordeshook 1970; Hinich and Munger 1994). It is the reasoning behind, for example, Democratic and Republican presidential candidates "running to the center" in the general election campaign after staking out more extreme positions within primaries in which the relevant median voters were closer to the ideological poles.

This theory makes a series of assumptions that generally include a single- or low-dimensional space of political conflict as well as single-peaked voter political orientations, which is to say that voters prefer a particular political orientation and have decreasing utility in either direction. The general formulation of the theory would not apply for example, if a voter on the issue of health care preferred either a single payer system or a completely private system but nothing in between. This "proximity theory of voting" assumes that voters prefer the candidate with the position that is the closest to theirs. In Figure 2 below, the voter will prefer Candidate C because that politician is the closest within a unidimensional issue space represented by a single line. The "neutral point" indicated on the line has no relevance to calculation of expected outcomes under the proximity theory. Given the complexity of our world, what is truly impressive about this theory, and unidimensional analyses of American

politics generally, are their predictive power at both the national (e.g., Erikson, MacKuen and Stimson 2002) and state levels (e.g., Erikson, Wright and McIver 1993). Though the articulations of these theories here do not do them justice, they are not, at their root, substantially more complicated than they appear here and nevertheless have sustained for several decades a large and fascinating literature on politics.

Figure 2: Diagram of Unidimensional Issue Space



One of the alternate theories advanced to explain outcomes in addition to the proximity theory is the directional theory of voting (Rabinowitz and Macdonald 1989; Macdonald, Listhaug, and Rabinowitz 1991). In a recent paper on polarization, the scholars who originally advanced the directional theory elegantly summarize the differences with the proximity theory as such:

> "Both are issue voting theories, although they operate with fundamentally different assumptions about the electorate. The proximity model assumes that voters have a clear preference for a particular policy position in some basic policy space, while the directional model assumes that voters have only a diffuse sense of directional preference with regard to policy, and vary in the intensity of their feelings. Hence, while both theories can be represented spatially, the underlying psychology that motivates the two models is different." (Rabinowitz et al. 2007, 2)

The underlying psychology of the proximity theory, according to this account, is fundamentally rational and calculating whereas directional theory is more impressionistic and

affective. Directional theory assumes only that voters know the side of a particular issue or political conflict they are on and choose the politician who stakes out the most extreme position on this issue (with the caveat that this position must be reasonable). The theory predicts that voters choose the candidate who is the furthest from the center on their side of the neutral point on an issue. Therefore, in Figure 2 above, the voter would prefer Candidate A to candidates B and C even though candidate C is the most proximate disregarding the neutral point and Candidate B is the most proximate on the voter's side of the neutral point.

An example from the area of state education policy illustrates the difference between these theories. This study relies on word choice to generate a measure of political orientation rather than on elite codings of policy positions. So the examples here are illustrative of the theories as applied to the speech of governors rather than being specific examples of applications of a method that will be described in detail in the following chapter.

Let's assume that a voter is has moderately conservative views on education and evaluates governors based on their articulation of one of the three following passages pertaining to education policy. The first is Don Siegelman, who in 2000 proposed to the State of Alabama a balanced plan that challenges the education lobby but one that also focuses first on increasing teacher salaries:

> "In summary, my school accountability plan: Raises teacher salaries to the national average, gives schools and teachers the tools they need to succeed, and rewards schools that improve. But there's a trade off: We will streamline our tenure laws, cut bureaucracy and waste, and issue report cards on every single public school."

The second is Gary Johnson who in the in 2002 proposed to the State of New Mexico an innovative but incremental plan that would phase in a pilot program for school vouchers across his state.

> "The voucher plan I am proposing this session begins as a pilot program and expands to include all students over time. It includes a five-year phase-in, at which time all New Mexico students, K-12, would receive a voucher to attend the school of their choice. The first-year pilot program would include students whose families are at 100% of poverty and who apply to participate in a lottery for one of the 2,900 vouchers that will be available."

The third is Rick Perry of Texas, who in his 2005 address to the State of Texas took a strong – if imprecise from the standpoint of substantive policy recommendations – stand against public education as the solution for struggling students.

> "Every child is entitled to a public education, but public education is not entitled to every child. Let's give children who need a second chance new choices that can forever change their future. Let's give them school choice."

These positions roughly correspond to those of Candidate A (Perry), Candidate B (Johnson), and Candidate C (Siegelman) in Figure 2 above. The proximity theory predicts that the voter would prefer either Siegelman or Johnson, both of whom staked out relatively moderate, incremental positions on policy reform. The exact choice would depend more closely on the voter's evaluation of her own position as well as that of the candidates. The directional theory, though, predicts that the voter would choose candidate A, Perry, because he is on the voter's side of the education policy debate and takes a strong stance that relies on the use of symbolic language rather than extensive specific details about a state policy.

Which of these two theories best explains political outcomes? There are difficulties adjudicating between the two theories due to a number of different issues including the freely adjustable parameters of the directional model (the neutral point and a "region of responsibility" outside of which appeals become too intense to sway voters) and inadequate information on whether all voters place candidates at adequately similar points along issue scales (Lewis and King 2000). It is not entirely clear whether the Manichean directional view best represent politics in any environment, all environments or merely in some

environments. However, the true impasse between these two theories may come because they do not necessarily offer directly competing predictions and therefore are not, in fact, in opposition to each other.

If the proximity and directional theories are as different as their authors propose, evaluating their competing predictions using the same data may not be appropriate. If directional stimulation does, in fact, rely on the manipulation of symbols whereas proximity behaviors are driven by policy calculations, evaluating outcomes based on data on voting behavior (often used to adjudicate between the two theories) may support one theory whereas data about symbolic speech patterns by candidates on the same issue may support the other. Given the different information processing assumptions implicit in these models, it may be possible for politicians to pursue a proximity and directional theory simultaneously if they stake out a moderate orientation in terms of their voting behavior but in their public addresses strongly stimulate the majority of voters on any given issue. Analyzing data on governing actions such as votes and vetoes would, therefore, be likely to confirm predictions of the data-driven proximity theory.

The strong relative predictive power of the directional theory on data that do not provide a natural test of its symbol-based theory (e.g. Rabinowitz et al., 2007) are an impressive testament to its predictive power. On the other hand, analyses voters' perceptions of candidate positions, such as Adams, Bishin and Dow (2004), and of speech data, such as this project, are perhaps a more natural test of the directional theory since they do not rely on direct accounts of the substantive content of the stances taken by politicians. I will evaluate the competing predictions of the proximity theory and the directional theory in the analyses that follow but even if evaluation of word choice within speeches indicates that a directional

mechanism appears to be at play, there may be other dimensions of political conflict along which we would observe state publics evaluating governors in a proximity framework. I will return to this issue in the chapter on fiscal policy.

On the other hand, the underlying psychological mechanisms at the base of directional and proximity theories may be over-exaggerated. The archetypical proximity voters may have a similarly imprecise and affective view of politics and simply prefer candidates who seem, through their manipulation of symbols or language, to be closer to them. The only necessary distinction between the models is whether voter evaluations have a strong directional component. To the extent that there are not other crucial psychological distinction between directional and proximity theories, analyses of language data provide valid tests of both theories.

There are, however, other alternative theories of what expressed political orientations state publics may prefer from their state executives. Governors, like presidents, are expected to be the head of state for their political region and therefore, to a certain extent, above politics. Lyn Ragsdale (1987), in her careful analysis of presidential speech, discovered that presidential speech within States of the Union that avoided an antagonistic speaking style led to "inclusive" public approval gains. Presidents who portrayed themselves as nonpartisan national leaders experienced approval gains both among those who shared their partisan identification and those members of the opposite party. The exception to this pattern during this time was Richard Nixon who engaged in an antagonistic speaking style reducing his approval among Democrats after each speech.

If this dynamic holds at the subnational level, state publics will prefer a governor who avoids partisan or ideological posturing and acts as the leader of the entire state. One of the

most important powers of governors is their role as "Head of State" and their performance in this informal role is synergistically connected to their ability to effectively utilize the formal powers of their office (Ferguson 2006, Bowman and Kearney 2005). In the words of Barth and Ferguson (2002, 269), "The governor's symbolic Head of State role is important in that it establishes an ongoing relationship between citizens and state government." Two expectations arise from the extent to which behavior as Head of State is linked to higher levels of approval. The first is that the public may reward a governor who consistently uses language typically associated with the other party, a "bipartisan" language style. The second is that the public may prefer a governor who avoids overly ideological speech altogether and delivers speeches that are moderate or "nonpartisan." The word "bipartisan" appears in 105 of the 293 speeches in the study (36%) though not always in instances that indicate that such a leadership style is a high priority for governors. In 2000, Tom Vilsack of Iowa joked after the warm ovation at the beginning of his speech that:

> "After a welcome like that from both sides of the aisle, I am tempted to sit down right now and keep my bipartisan support intact. But I will take a chance and speak about the state of our great state and its future, taking the risk that you will be as supportive, generous, and enthusiastic with your applause when I finish."

In laying out their legislative agendas for the year, perhaps governors can avoid sounding overly partisan in spite of Vilsack's concerns. If the public prefers such a leadership style, we will observe governors who are successful in this endeavor having higher levels of approval and greater electoral success. There is a further motivation for governors to use language that is counter to that of their own national party. Incumbents, in particular, may benefit from an ambiguous position that allows both partisans and potential opponents to assume that they share the same beliefs. The intuitive benefit of such ambiguous stances, though, has been called into question both within theoretical (Shepsle 1972; Enelow and

Hinich 1981) and empirical literature (Bartels 1986; Franklin 1991). The chapters that follow will more clearly operationalize each of these hypotheses, as well as the more traditional theories of voting, as they related to evaluation of impact of each of the different political outcomes of interest in this study. We cannot assume that directional behavior has the same implication for increasing incumbents' vote share, for example, as it does for influencing their chances of reelection.

Mechanisms of Communication

For these position-taking strategies to influence voters there must be mechanisms of communication between governors and their state publics. Since this project is not about the media specifically, I do not test countervailing theories that turn on the different characteristics of media communities within the states. The following section reviews the work of others in this area to build the case that the public does receive information about governors, information that can serve as the basis of evaluations of these governors' political orientations.

Though, in general, the American public is significantly less informed about political matters than about current commercial trends and the personal details of the lives of celebrities (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996), they do appear to know more about their governors relative to all other politicians except for the President. In an ABC/Washington Post survey taken in a 1989, a non-election year, 72 percent of the survey respondents were able to correctly name their state governors whereas only 52 percent of respondents could name either of their two senators (Squire and Fastnow 1994). Voters may care more about their governors because they perceive them to have a greater impact on their daily lives than

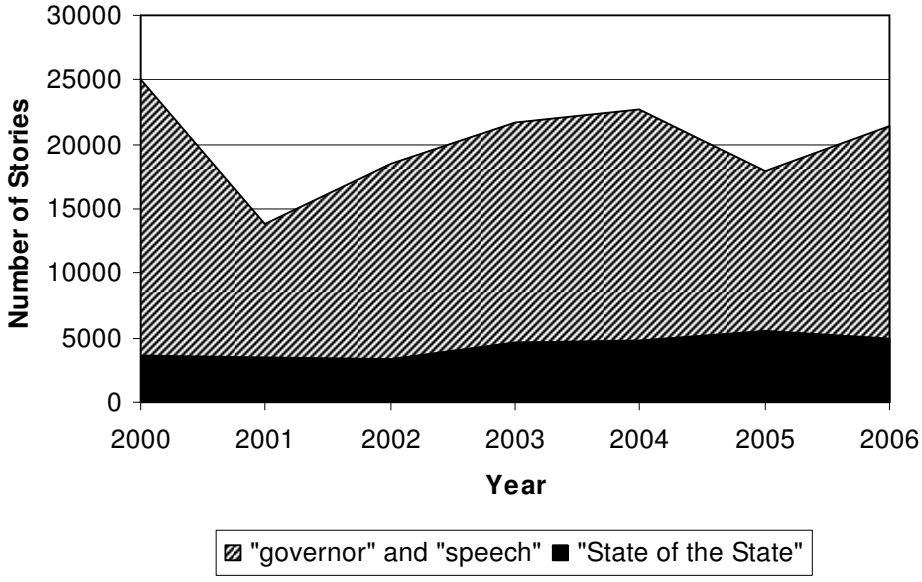
other politicians such as senators (Wright 1974), and citizens are more affectively attached to their state officials, in general, than they are even to the president (Stein 1990). They also receive more and better information about governors than about state and national legislators, and stories about governors tend to be directly linked to state-specific policy concerns (Tidmarch, Hyman and Sorkin 1984). The amount of news coverage each governor receives swamps that devoted to the senators from the state (Squire and Fastnow 1994), but governors did not necessarily benefit from this coverage as they had lower approval ratings, on average, than senators, and the electoral challengers to incumbent governors were more likely to be successful. The primary medium through which the public receives information about these governors is the newspaper (Gormley 1975). Television news, particularly local television news has very little coverage of state politics (Graber 1989). An analysis of the media coverage of gubernatorial and senatorial elections demonstrated that elections involving governors received much more detailed and significantly more balanced content than those involving senators (Kahn 1995).

The specific words within gubernatorial speeches, however, need not directly influence public evaluations. They may merely be a measure of political orientation that is broadly consistent with the placements that citizens develop using different information. Barth and Ferguson (2002) examined inaugural addresses to categorize governors' personalities. They leave the causal mechanism of transmission of these profiles implicit under the reasonable assumption that the personalities of these well-known public officials are apparent to the public. Further, even if direct quotes from governors and their speeches are not included in articles, these articles may effectively communicate a political orientation in the journalists' own words. However, much coverage of governors does utilize direct

quotes from their speeches. This is consistent with the media's orientation as institutions that are broadly responsive to political officials (Cook 1998). Journalists value and cultivate political sources, such as the governor and the member of the governors' staffs, as central to their work (Kuklinski and Sigelman 1992) and rely on them heavily given the short deadlines inherent to newswork (Schudson 2002). Like the president (Sullivan 2004), the governor "is the story," and the media do report directly on the speeches of governors.

Figure 3 below displays a count of the number of stories in 100 newspapers from all 50 states[3] that includes both the words "governor" and "speech" during the time period of this study, 2000-2006. The number of stories in these papers the include references to gubernatorial speech by this measure ranges from 25,116 in 2000 to 13,768 stories in 2001 with the average number of stories during this time period being 20,161. The number of

Figure 3: Coverage of Governors' Speeches in 100 Major American Newspapers, 2000-2006



[3] Source: "America's Newspapers" database, accessed at http://infoweb.newsbank.com.

articles in the top 100 papers that reference the "State of the State," most of which pertain directly to or include material about the actual State of the State speech, ranges from 5,570 to 3,308 with the average number per year being 4,357.

As might be expected, the larger papers – *The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Boston Globe* – are overrepresented in the count of articles that include the words "governor" and "speech," but there is ample coverage even in relatively smaller metro papers. In 2000, *The New York Times* had 823 stories that included these words, *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* had 252 and *The Savannah Morning News* had 89 stories. The median number of such stories per paper in this year is 157. Articles that reference the "state of the state" are fewer in number but are distributed more evenly across geographies and among the 100 largest papers. In 2000, the outlier is *The Salt Lake Tribune* with 282 of the 3,618 articles, the second and third most articles come from *The Capital Times* in Madison, Wisconsin with 83 articles and *The Charleston Daily Mail* from Charleston, West Virginia with 74 articles. The median number of such articles in this year is 22.

What is the content of the coverage of these State of the State speeches? Generally, each major paper runs at least one article immediately after the governor delivers the speech summarizing it using direct quotes. Even opinion pieces that refer to the speech generally employ quotes as a part of their article. This is how one irate columnist from the *Kansas City Star* of Kansas City Missouri responded to Governor Bob Holden's speech in 2004:

> "We now have it straight from Missouri Gov. Bob Holden: If you're not in favor of higher taxes, you're immoral and heartless. Here's the 'money quote' from his State of the State address last week: 'There is nothing moral in raising standards and expectations at a struggling school, only to deny the necessary funding. Look at this through a child's eyes - first we encouraged them to dream, then you denied them the means....That's just cruel.' … Last week's speech was a pretty good example of his technique. Holden sprayed poison all over the people whose cooperation he needs to achieve his stated goals." (McClanahan 2004)

Although the vast majority of articles about State of the State speeches run in January when almost all governors deliver their addresses, journalists continue to refer to them throughout the year, perhaps because these speeches are deep reservoirs of specific quotes summarizing the governor's priorities. A November 2005 article from *The Nashville Tennessean* about the sale of timber mentioned that Governor Breseden had made the preservation of forests in the Cumberland Plateau a priority during his State of the State speech eleven months earlier (Alligood 2005). Governors also understand what important vehicles for setting the agenda these speeches are. A 2004 Associated Press article that ran in *The Lubbock Avalanche-Journal* reported on the effort of Governor Dirk Kempthorne of Idaho, who was serving as the Chair of the Western Governors Association at the time, to focus the attention of the states on long-term care of the elderly. It mentioned that, "The Idaho governor hopes his yearlong work on long-term care paid off and that his fellow governors will include the issue in their state-of-the-state addresses next year." (*Lubbock Avalanche-Journal* 2004).

The central purpose of this project is not to directly examine the media coverage of American state governors. Nor do I propose that every member of the public who has an opinion about the governor bases that opinion entirely or even primarily on information that they received from the media. Further, this project allows for the possibility that public opinions about the political orientation of state governors are based on the content of other symbolic communication throughout the year for which the word choices within States of the State are merely a valid proxy. What I have provided evidence for here is that – as it pertains to the transmission of specific language from these speeches as well as other public addresses by state governors – the channels of communication are open. Major newspapers across

America cover governors and their speeches; citizens in the states have a greater amount of information about governors than about any politician other than the president. So although it is possible that the majority of members of the state public develop an opinion about the political orientation of their governor without having been present, in person, for a single word that the governor spoke throughout the year, there is a mechanism of communication for the actual words in these speeches to directly reach and influence citizens in the state. The next chapter advances a method for measuring that political orientation using those words.

Chapter Three
Methods: Measuring Political Orientation Using Words as Data

An evaluation of how the expressed political orientations of governors influence their public approval ratings, vote shares, and chances of reelection requires a measure that places these executives along a dimension of discourse that is salient in the minds of the public in their states. Part of the challenge of studying governors is that no such measure yet exists[4] which may explain why systems-level behavioral studies of state politics sometimes omit governors from their models (Erikson, Wright and McIver 1993). In this chapter, I develop a measure of the "partisan signal" in gubernatorial speech. This is the underlying metric for the central independent variables in the analyses of the subsequent chapters.

In the sections that follow, I first describe in detail the reservoir of speech data from which I construct this measure of the expressed political orientation in gubernatorial speech. I then review recent developments in the field of quantitative content analysis, contrast "inferential" and "a priori" analyses, and explain why one particular "a priori" method, "Wordscores" (Laver, Benoit and Garry 2003, Martin and Vanberg 2008) is an appropriate tool to answer the central theoretical question of this work. I then provide additional detail on the placements produced by this method, the words that drive these placements, and the substantive content of the dimension.

[4] A project to develop a set of expert estimations of the ideology of governors is underway.

State of the State Speeches

The data for this project are "State of the State" speeches, highly conventionalized addresses that governors deliver, generally at the beginning of each calendar year of their terms. The physical audience for this speech is a joint session of the state legislature although other political elites, including prospective challengers, are often in attendance. In certain larger states, the address is carried live on public television, and, in all states, the media provide descriptive accounts of these speeches to the general public, primarily within the pages of major local newspapers.

The substantive content of these speeches is remarkably similar. They are the vehicle through which governors highlight their accomplishments of the previous year and articulate their legislative agendas for the coming year. They typically contain a great deal of specific detail on governors' policy proposals. In 2005, Arnold Schwarzenegger joked about these conventions:

> "In these State of the State speeches, governors often begin by listing their accomplishments of the past year. I will do the same. The year before I took office as governor, California had 300 days of sunshine. Last year, under my administration, we had 312 days of sunshine. That's what true leadership is all about."

Governors generally articulate these achievements and agendas in such a sequential and distinct manner that they are sometimes captured in the public record as bulleted lists. These excerpts from Olene Walker's speech to the State of Utah I 2004 comprise an outline typical of these clearly-structured addresses:

> "As I explained when I submitted my budget recommendations to the Legislature, I am committed to the following three priorities: First, we must keep our Triple A bond rating. … Second, it is also important that we retain our state and education employees. … Third, maintaining quality education in our state is essential."

She follows this list of priorities with an equally well-structured set of policy proposals that is archetypical both in its content and its clarity:

> "My budget recommendation for education has three main components. First, the modest salary increase for educators I just mentioned. Second is simply an increase to cover the costs of additional students entering the system … [But] Education is not just about the number of students and teachers. It is also about the quality of education we provide. The third component of my education recommendation addresses this issue. … I am asking … for $30 million in new funding to focus on kindergarten through third grade reading to ensure that every child can read at grade level."

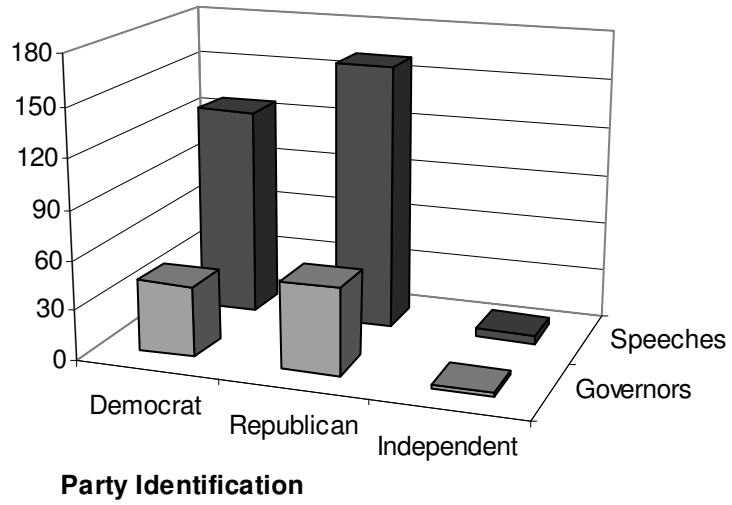
A very small number of governors stray from this format to deliver speeches that express a political philosophy rather than a specific plan of legislative action. Although these deviations from standard practice are extremely rare that highlight the fact that speech data, though plentiful and easily accessible for study particularly since the advent of online archives, present a series of distinct and daunting challenges for scholars who would analyze them to draw valid inferences about the role of speech in public life. The remarkably consistent structure of this political communication, however, makes these speeches an ideal source for the construction of a measure of the expressed political orientation of governors.

These speeches have proven to be deep reservoirs for many different types of meaningful political analyses of state governors, including an account of the impact of the personalities expressed within them. Barth and Ferguson (2002) find that governors' who communicate a desire for power have higher levels of public approval while those who express that they are motivated to achieve have lower approval ratings. They suggest that this may be tied to their finding from another analysis of these speeches that a communicated desire for power is consistent with the speech of executives who are successful in the legislative arena (Ferguson and Barth 2002). Other scholarship has tapped these speeches for

information about governors political orientations for redistribution (DiLeo 1997, 2001), policy agendas (Herzik 1991), and economic and social policy orientations (Coffey 2005). Though they pertain to many different policy areas across states and time, they tend to emphasize education, criminal justice (Coffey 2005) and, during this period, homeland security. One of the few studies to directly measure the consequences of this important rhetorical behavior found that presence of policy items within this speech increases their likelihood of passage through the legislature (Ferguson 2003).

The period of analysis of this study is 2000 to 2006. There are 293 State of the State speeches that are publicly available from this time, all of which have been archived online by the staff of Stateline.org.[5] Ninety-seven different governors delivered one or more of these speeches. Figure 4 below shows that this set of governors and speeches is relatively evenly

Figure 4: Number of Governors and Speeches by Party



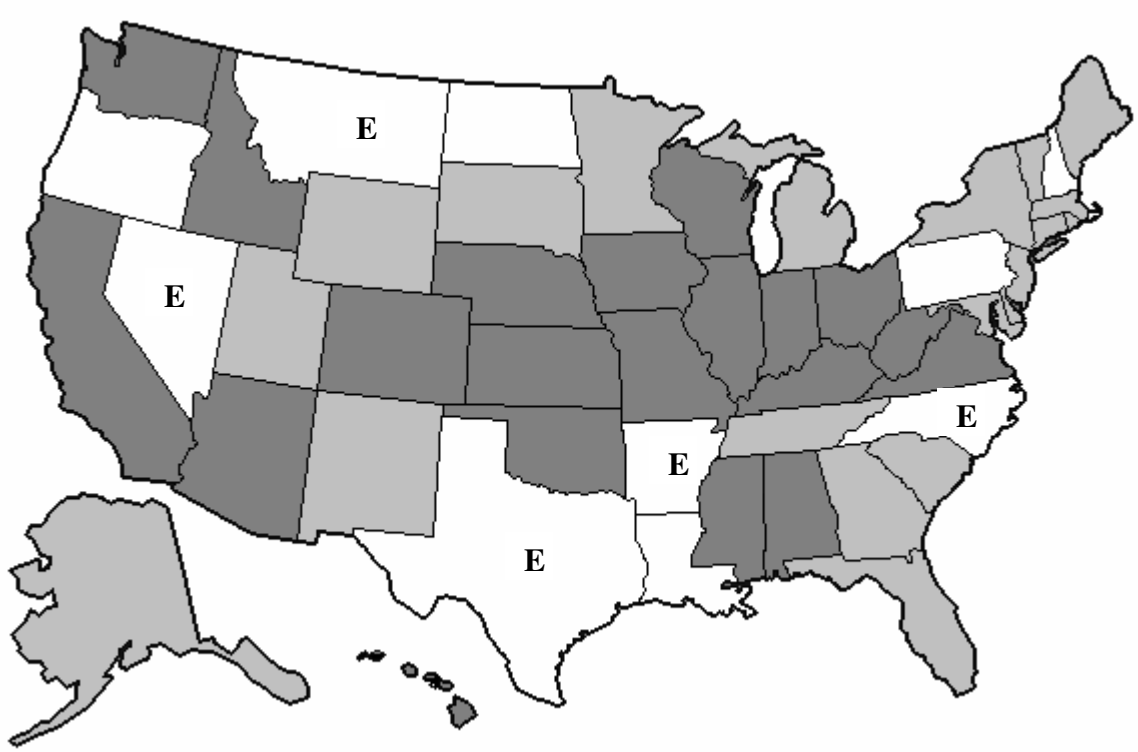
[5] Available at http://www.stateline.org/live/resources/State+Speeches

balanced between the Democratic and Republican Party. Forty-three Democratic governors delivered 127 of the speeches in the dataset; 52 Republican governors gave 161 of these addresses. There are also two independent governors in the dataset, Angus King of Maine who gave three speeches during this time period of Jesse Ventura of Minnesota who delivered two.

Figure 5 on the following page shows that the speeches are also relatively evenly distributed across states. If there were a speech from each governor in each state during this seven-year time period, the dataset would include 350 speeches. However, there are only 293 speeches accessible, and the median number of speeches per state is 6. The outlier in this regard is the state of Pennsylvania where only Governor Tom Ridge's 2000 speech and Governor Rendell's 2006 speech are present in the public archival record.[6] Two factors account for the discrepancy. The first is that, by convention, governors in five states (Montana, Nevada, Texas, Arkansas and North Carolina) deliver a speech only every other year. The second is that the remainder of the speeches are not present in the archival record either because a governor chose not to deliver a speech in a given year due to the timing of an election or of a resignation or because a speech was not preserved for the public record. The distribution of speeches across states shows no strong geographic or temporal pattern, so there does not appear to be selection bias that would unduly influence the results. Every governor who served during this time is represented by at least one speech except for Craig Benson who was governor of Vermont for one two-year term, 2003 – 2004, and does not have any speeches in the public record. Vermont and New Hampshire are the only states that had two-year terms for their governors during the period of this analysis.

[6] Appendix A includes a complete list of the speeches in the dataset by governor, state and year.

Figure 5: Number of Speeches by State



= 7 speeches

= 5 - 6 speeches

= 2 - 4 speeches

E = By convention, speeches every other year

Quantitative Content Analysis

Given these speech data, which method of content analysis is best suited to produce a valid measure of expressed political orientation along a national spectrum of discourse? There are many potential methods for developing such placements. Broadly speaking, they fall into two different categories. The first of these are "inferential," the second "a priori." (Laver, Benoit and Garry 2003)

Political scientists are familiar with working within these two methodological paradigms from voting data-based analyses of the political orientations of legislators. Poole-Rosenthal scores (Poole and Rosenthal 1985) are perhaps the best known example of the calculation of an inferential dimension. The algorithm at the basis of these scores is one that analyzes the consonance and dissonance of voting among legislators to uncover the dimensional structure of voting within Congress. Keith Poole's statement that, "Voting in Congress is now almost purely one-dimensional – a single dimension accounts for about 92 percent of roll call voting choices in the 107th House and Senate," is an empirical observation driven by the application of a scaling algorithm to produce a mathematical dimension (Poole 2007; McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal 2006). He makes the point that this dimension is not one of logically associated concepts but simply of patterns of behavior. Presented with these robust and mathematically discernable patterns, scholars engage in *inferential* reasoning as to the processes such as party leadership (Aldrich 1995, Rohde 1991) or ideological voting (Krehbiel 1993) that may have created the dimension.

Another common technique for measuring the political orientation of members of national legislatures is to rely on interest group ratings such as those provided by Americans for Democratic Action (ADA). Though these also rely on an evaluation of the voting behavior of legislators, they are fundamentally *a priori* in that they evaluate these behaviors within a pre-established framework, in this case commitment to a set of principles of a particular interest group. This latter dimension is therefore subjective while the former is objective and these terms are used interchangeably in the content analysis literature (e.g., Slapin and Proksch 2006) with inferential and a priori respectively.

Instead of using votes, methods of quantitative content analysis produce placements for parties or politicians using words as data. Though the analysis of voting behavior contains many methodological challenges – such as accounting for the impact of logrolling versus true spatial voting (Poole and Rosenthal 1991) – they pale in comparison to those presented by the use of words as data. Words are substantially more numerous than are votes. Any individual word can have multiple meanings (polysemy) which vary across context and time, and different words can have the exact same meaning (synonymy). Words come in larger contextual units that may be substantively significant such as phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and documents as well as idioms, metaphors and turns of phrase. Further, a crucial component of speech, particularly of rhetoric, is the delivery of the speaker and, therefore, a complete description of a text political text would have to include accounts of the use, by the speaker, of humor, irony and expression tapping the vast range of human emotions. In short, there are a whole range of semiotic issues (Barthes 1987) that cannot help but preoccupy the minds of any careful researcher driven to analyze the language of speech.

In an attempt to simplify their task, scholars who use texts in their analyses generally do so with preconceived coding schemes that look for very specific elements of these texts such as simple counts of articles about a particular subject (e.g., Baumgartner and Jones 1993), a predetermined list of frames (e.g., Callaghan and Schnell 2001), or general themes (e.g., Kellstedt 2000). Although such approaches still dominate, political scientists have increasingly begun to apply techniques of computer-aided quantitative content analysis to analyze more detailed information from larger corpuses of speech data. One fascinating early study (Mosteller and Wallace 1964) determined the authorship of certain unsigned

Federalist Papers. A key insight from this work was the critical differences among texts are often subtle distinctions of word usage that may be missed by even the most expert coder. In this case, it was the differential use of articles such as "of" and "the" that distinguished Madison from Hamilton. This agnosticism in regard to what are the crucial difference between texts is a distinct advantage of computer-coded approaches as even the most objective human observers will bring their own preconceptions to engagement with the work, biases that may ultimately influence the results. Building on literatures within the disciplines, in particular, of linguistics and computer science (see Krippendorff 2004) and using tools borrowed or adapted from applications within other contexts, recent political science analyses have focused on gleaning meaning from such diverse types of speech as party manifestos (Laver, Benoit, and Garry 2003, Proksch and Slapin 2006) legislative speeches (Laver and Benoit 2002, Laver, Benoit and Garry 2003, Monroe and Maeda 2004, Diermeier et al. 2007), campaign speeches (Laver, Benoit and Sauger 2006), and judicial decisions (McGuire and Vanberg 2005).

These methods generally rely on evaluations of the relative frequency of word usage within documents. Many *inferential* approaches (e.g., Monroe and Maeda 2004) generate placements along one or more dimensions that are based solely on these frequencies. *A priori* approaches (e.g., Laver, Benoit and Garry 2003), on the other hand, generate rhetorical ideal points for texts (Monroe and Maeda 2004) using reference to the placement of other texts or words along predetermined dimensions. Some methods marry these two approaches by using, for example, predetermined texts by conservative and liberal legislators to "train" a computer to recognize ideology within speech (Diermeier et al., 2007).

Inferential analyses have the advantage of being objective, although the presence of a mathematical dimension within speech is not necessarily indicative that that structure has substantive meaning. Nevertheless, since there is strong evidence to suggest that there is a national dimension of discourse along which politicians will pursue various position-taking strategies using word choice, an important first step is to ascertain whether that dimension is readily discernable within these data by using algorithms such as factor analysis and multi-dimensional scaling. One publicly available tool for such analyses that was developed specifically for analyzing political texts is "wordfish" (Slapin and Proksch 2007). It compresses the variation among texts into a single dimension. Its developers have shown that it produces results quite similar to those developed through techniques such as expert coding or the a priori approach described below. However, they also caution that it is likely to produce a valid, or any, placement only when there is a clear structure to the data, such as when analyzing platform language only within a specific policy area.

Though wordfish, and other such inferential approaches, might be perfect methods for analyzing gubernatorial speech as it relates to specific policy issues, they do not appear to be able to discern a meaningful structure due the dimensional complexity of this set of State of the State speeches. The general statistical approach they use (see also Monroe and Maeda 2004) is a maximum likelihood calculation. Even after greatly reducing the complexity of the data by stemming the words (see below) and reducing the frequency matrices to include only stems that appeared more than 100 times overall in 50 or more documents, I ran into one of two problems using these equations. At the default setting for the tolerance criteria, the equations did not converge which is to say that there was no clear global maximum, or ideal single-dimensional solution to scaling the data. Dramatic reduction of the tolerance criteria,

on the other hand, allowed the equation to converge but produced, after multiple iterations, sets of placements that were only weakly correlated with each other, negatively correlated with placements using the methods described below, and entirely uncorrelated with any of the variables that should structure these speech data such as the partisanship of the speaker or of the majority of the state public. Other scaling approaches may discern the structure in these data even if wordfish did not, although simple factor analysis of the type presented by Simon and Xenos (2004) also do not reveal a clear mathematical structure to these data. However, since the theory predicts that voters will respond to signals sent along a clear and salient dimension of discourse, these more complicated inferential approaches may not be appropriate for this specific project even if they are ideal for other applications.

There may be a dimension of discourse that is recognizable to voters in the American states, though, even if it is not readily apparent through mathematical analyses of the structure of word frequency matrices. A central characteristic of *a priori* approaches is that they specify the dimension of discourse prior to the analysis. This is a disadvantage if there is no valid measure of a given dimension, but such approaches become useful in direct proportion to the confidence that we have in the estimates or assignments of placements for texts or politicians along this dimension. For reasons that will be articulated more thoroughly below, I argue that the national dimension of partisan discourse is well represented within the texts of party platforms of national and state parties. One methodological tool that relies on the use of such "reference texts" is "Wordscores" (Laver, Benoit and Garry 2003, Martin and Vanberg 2008).

Wordscores

Wordscores is an elegant method for generating a measure of political orientation for texts using words as data. The computation that produces these "rhetorical ideal points" (Monroe and Maeda 2004) is very simple. Words receive particular scores based on their relative frequency in two or more "reference texts" with predetermined placement along a single dimension. The placement of any given "object text,"[7] then, is equal to the mean value of every scored word within it. The advantages of this method are that it is conceptually straightforward, highly replicable and particularly suited to analyses in which the underlying dimension of interest is well represented by the chosen reference texts. This is not to suggest, however, that Wordscores will be the appropriate quantitative context analysis tool for all – or even many – applications. There is no Rosetta Stone of quantitative content analysis that will allow us to unlock the secrets even of the subset of the questions that can be asked and answered using these methods. Before I discuss the application of this method for this particular project for which I contend that Wordscores is ideally suited, I will present in greater detail the equations that generate the placements.

Wordscores develops rhetorical ideal points in four steps: 1) word weighting, 2) word scoring, 3) text scoring, and 4) text transformation. Word weighting examines word usage in a series of reference texts to answer the question: what is the probability that I am reading a particular text given that I see a particular word? This calculation relies on a matrix of word frequencies that has been standardized to transform these frequencies into percentages. This controls for the differing lengths of texts. We cannot assume that a politician using the word

[7] Laver, Benoit and Garry (2003) call these "virgin texts." "Object text," however, is a term that has greater currency in the larger literature on content analysis.

"freedom" 50 times in a 500 word text is equivalent to one using this word 50 times in a 5,000 word text.

The weight *W* of a word *w* with a standardized frequency *F* within a given reference text *r1* among a set of *n* reference texts is equal to:

$$W_{wr1} = \frac{F_{wr1}}{\sum_{r1...rn} F_{wr}}$$

Wordscoring multiplies these weights by exogenously determined placements of the references texts. The score *S* of a word *w* given the *a priori* placement A for each text *r* along dimension *d* is equal to:

$$S_{wd} = \sum_{r} (W_{wr} \times A_{rd})$$

Since there are only two reference texts in this analysis, sets of Democratic and Republican national platforms, and the placement *A* equals 100 for the Democratic reference text and 0 for the Republican reference text, the computation of scores using this method is even more simple: the score for a given word is equal to its weight within the Democratic reference texts multiplied by 100. Put another way, the score of a word is the probability, expressed as a percentage, that we are reading the Democratic set of platforms given that we are seeing it.

The placement *P* for an object text *o* along the dimension *d* is equal to the sum of the frequency *F* of the words *w* multiplied by the scores *S* of those words:

$$P_{od} = \sum_{w} (F_{wd} \times S_{wd})$$

This is to say that the placement of a text is the weighted average of its scored words.

There is just one more step. Since most texts will contain many similar words, these first set of placements are referred to as "raw scores" and are generally closely clustered together. There are competing views as to the best method for transforming these placements into scores along a dimension with greater dispersion and substantive interpretability. For this project, I will adopt the Martin-Vanberg method (Martin and Vanberg 2008) for transforming the scores. This method recaptures the *a priori* placements for the reference texts and gives the object texts dispersion along the dimension that is equivalent to that of the reference texts. The advantage to this method, relative to the original transformation proposed by Laver, Benoit and Garry (2003), is that it is not influenced by the set of object texts in the analysis. The disadvantage is that it is impossible to recapture the *a priori* placements of the reference texts exactly if there are more than two texts. As there are only two texts in this analysis, I have chosen the Martin-Vanberg method. Hereinafter, the "placements" of these speeches, technically, to the Martin-Vanberg transformed Wordscores.

The transformed placement *T*, given a reference text *r1* that has a lesser placement *P*[8] along dimension *d* than reference text *r2,* is equal to:

$$T_{od} = [(P_{od} - P_{r1}) \times \frac{A_{r2} - A_{r1}}{P_{r2} - P_{r1}}] + A_{r1}$$

Again, the designation of 100 as the *a priori* placement of the Democratic platforms, r2, and 0 for the Republican platforms, r1, simplifies the calculation considerably yielding:

$$T_{od} = (P_{od} - P_{r1}) \times \frac{100}{P_{r2} - P_{r1}}$$

[8] The placement or raw score given to each reference text which is not the same as its *a priori* placement unless the reference texts share no common words which would be highly unusual in analyses of speech data.

The intention of this project is neither to advance a novel method of quantitative content analysis nor to take sides in the ongoing methodological disputes of this literature. I have simply chosen a method – Wordscores – that I believe is ideally suited to produce a measure that will be useful for answering the central research question of this study. The appropriateness of this method relies primarily on the construct validity of the reference texts vis-à-vis the underlying concept they are chosen to represent. Therefore, I will begin my discussion of how I apply this method within this particular context with a more extensive discussion of the choice of reference texts themselves before proceeding to the actual Wordscores.

Reference Texts

One central characteristic of this method is that the placements are driven entirely by the chosen reference texts. This is a distinct advantage of this method if the texts themselves represent well the underlying dimension of interest. The dimension here is that of national partisan speech. Although there are certainly many different types of texts that qualify as "partisan speech" – including legislative speech, State of the Union speeches and campaign stump speeches – platforms are specifically designed to be a comprehensive articulation of the policy priorities and rhetorical tropes of a political party at a certain point in time and represent the product of compromises among leaders of important factions within the party. They have two distinct advantages over reference texts such as State of the Union speeches that may initially appear to be superior given, in particular, Laver et al.'s (2003) warning against moving across modes of speech when choosing reference texts and object texts. States of the Union are highly idiosyncratic and, unlike platforms, are not bound by convention to address a broad spectrum of issues. During this time period, in particular, the

vast majority of material in George W. Bush's States of the Union pertained to issues of terrorism, national security and the War in Iraq. These topics are mentioned in governors' speeches, but so are many other topics that are not present in States of the Union. Further, presidential speeches are not constructed in explicit opposition to each other. During this period, President Clinton delivered two States of the Union (2000-2001) and President George W. Bush delivered five (2002-2006). Though these speeches certainly expressed countervailing political philosophies as was appropriate for representatives of competing political parties, they were delivered in different time periods and therefore had different agendas and areas of substantive policy focus. The underlying mechanism that motivates the concern of Benoit et al. (2003) not to move across modes of speech when choosing reference and object texts is that the reference texts should be a good dictionary of terms that will be salient, and used in a similar manner, in the object texts. In some ways, therefore, these approaches actually share a great deal with qualitative approaches that rely on the use of pre-established coding dictionaries such as the Laswell's value dictionary (Laswell and Kaplan 1950) and General Inquirer categories (Stone 1966).

For a comprehensive source of political words used in senses that are politically salient and similar to the manner in which they are used in political speech, I have chosen party platforms as the reference texts for this application of Wordscores. Specifically, the Republican reference text combines the platforms of the national Republican Party from 2000 and 2004 as well as the Texas State Republican Party platforms from these years. The Democratic reference text includes the platforms of the national Democratic Party from 2000 and 2004 as well as the Washington State Democratic Party platforms from these years. I choose platforms from both of these years because, although there are many similarities

between them, new issues emerged onto the agenda between 2000 and 2004, in particular the states' concerns with the implementation of George W. Bush's "No Child Left Behind" Act. I included the state platforms along with the national platforms because the states address many state-specific policy issues to which the national platforms devote little or no attention. The dimension of discourse in this project is a national dimension, but by this is "national" in the sense of "including all of the states." I selected Texas and Washington because these are the most conservative and liberal, respectively, state parties (Berry et al. 1998) and hence ideally suited to anchor the ends of a spectrum of discourse. These platforms were included for theoretical rather than empirical reasons. The correlation between the scores produced using only the national platforms and those using just this set of state platforms is .96.[9]

Wordscores

Table 1 below presents some summary statistics from this analysis. The difference between "unique word stems" and "total word stems" is accounted for by the repetition of words within speeches. The table also shows that almost all words in each of these speeches received scores and were therefore a part of the analysis. This is to say that almost every word in each of the speeches, on average almost 95% of the words, were present somewhere in at least one of the party platforms. It is possible, however, that a word within a given

[9] Two more technical notes: I stemmed the words using a Porter stemmer (Porter 1980) and part-of-speech tagged and manually removed articles from the texts. Stemming reduces words to their semantic root such that incidences of the word "educate" and "educates" are grouped into the same frequency count under the stem "educat." This is a tool to reduce the complexity of the data (primarily to account for synonymy) without removing very much important information. As for part of speech tagging, although articles such as "of" and "the" may have provided important empirical leverage in figuring out differences in authorship (see above) they are not of substantive interest in this application. Again, this is a choice that was made for theoretical rather than empirical reasons. The scores produced by using reference texts with and without articles are correlated at .98.

speech was used in a different sense or context than within the platform (polysemy). This analysis does not account for such differences.

Table 1: Summary Statistics from Wordscores Analysis

	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Unique Word Stems Scored	843	153	392	1296
Total Word Stems Scored	3860	1186	1137	9202
Percent Word Stems Scored	94.1	1.3	89.7	97.1
Wordscores	62.8 (median 62.9)	10.4	22.2	91.3

The Wordscores for the speeches themselves ranged from 22.2 to 91.3. In substantive terms, a score of 0 is mathematically equivalent in its word usage to the text of the Republican platforms, 100 to the set of Democratic platforms. Table 2 on the following page lists the following two pages ranks the 97 governors in this study by the average Wordscore values of their State of the State speeches. It also displays the party of each governor and whether the governor's state is in the top or bottom quartile in terms its percentage of party identifiers. This chart is merely a summary account to show that the scores align with general expectations that the nature of speech is related to the party of the speaker as well as the state in which it was delivered. States are labeled as "competitive" if they fall in the middle half of the distribution. Only one of the fifteen governors who delivered the most "Republican" speeches is a Democrat (Freudenthal); only three of the fifteen governors who delivered the most "Democratic" speeches are Republicans (including Arnold Schwarzenegger in California).

Table 2: Partisan Signal in Gubernatorial Speech

Governor	State	Partisan Signal	Governor's Party	State Partisanship
Freudenthal	Wyoming	32	Democrat	Republican
Johanns	Nebraska	37	Republican	Republican
Graves	Kansas	46	Republican	Republican
Murkowski	Alaska	48	Republican	Republican
Ehrlich	Maryland	48	Republican	Democratic
Heineman	Nebraska	49	Republican	Republican
Barbour	Mississippi	49	Republican	Competitive
Blunt	Missouri	50	Republican	Competitive
Hull	Arizona	50	Republican	Republican
Underwood	West Virginia	51	Republican	Democratic
Geringer	Wyoming	53	Republican	Republican
Lingle	Hawaii	53	Republican	Democratic
Johnson	New Mexico	54	Republican	Democratic
McCallum	Wisconsin	54	Republican	Competitive
Rell	Connecticut	55	Republican	Democratic
Cayetano	Hawaii	55	Democrat	Democratic
Owens	Colorado	55	Republican	Competitive
Carnahan	Missouri	56	Democrat	Competitive
Manchin	West Virginia	56	Democrat	Democratic
Perry	Texas	56	Republican	Republican
Minner	Delaware	57	Democrat	Democratic
Fletcher	Kentucky	57	Republican	Democratic
Knowles	Alaska	57	Democrat	Republican
Huntsman	Utah	57	Republican	Republican
Ryan	Illinois	57	Republican	Competitive
Ventura	Minnesota	58	Independent	Competitive
Kempthorne	Idaho	58	Republican	Republican
Carcieri	Rhode Island	58	Republican	Democratic
Daniels	Indiana	58	Republican	Competitive
Martz	Montana	58	Republican	Republican
Kaine	Virginia	58	Democrat	Competitive
Engler	Michigan	58	Republican	Competitive
Dean	Vermont	58	Democrat	Competitive
Cellucci	Massachusetts	59	Republican	Democratic
Guinn	Nevada	59	Republican	Republican
Walker	Utah	60	Republican	Republican
Patton	Kentucky	60	Democrat	Democratic
Kernan	Indiana	60	Democrat	Competitive
Rounds	South Dakota	61	Republican	Republican
Napolitano	Arizona	61	Democrat	Republican
Sebelius	Kansas	61	Democrat	Republican
Pataki	New York	61	Republican	Democratic
Douglas	Vermont	61	Republican	Competitive
Ridge	Pennsylvania	61	Republican	Competitive
Riley	Alabama	61	Republican	Competitive
Rendell	Pennsylvania	62	Democrat	Competitive
Wise	West Virginia	62	Democrat	Democratic
Henry	Oklahoma	62	Democrat	Competitive
Romney	Massachusetts	63	Republican	Democratic

Table 2: Partisan Signal in Gubernatorial Speech (cont'd)

Governor	State	Partisan Speech	Governor's Party	State Partisanship
Gilmore	Virginia	63	Republican	Competitive
Lynch	New Hampshire	63	Democrat	Republican
Davis	California	64	Democrat	Democratic
Rowland	Connecticut	64	Republican	Democratic
Kitzhaber	Oregon	64	Democrat	Competitive
Codey	New Jersey	65	Democrat	Competitive
Sanford	South Carolina	65	Republican	Republican
Swift	Massachusetts	66	Republican	Democratic
Perdue	Georgia	66	Republican	Competitive
Leavitt	Utah	66	Republican	Republican
Doyle	Wisconsin	66	Democrat	Competitive
Warner	Virginia	66	Democrat	Competitive
Gregoire	Washington	67	Democrat	Competitive
Bush	Texas	67	Republican	Competitive
O'Bannon	Indiana	67	Democrat	Competitive
Foster	Lousiana	67	Republican	Democratic
Carper	Delaware	67	Democrat	Democratic
Bredesen	Tennessee	68	Democrat	Competitive
Holden	Missouri	68	Democrat	Competitive
Blanco	Lousiana	68	Democrat	Democratic
McGreevey	New Jersey	68	Democrat	Competitive
Almond	Rhode Island	68	Republican	Democratic
Taft	Ohio	68	Republican	Competitive
Huckabee	Arkansas	68	Republican	Democratic
Hoeven	North Dakota	69	Republican	Republican
Whitman	New Jersey	69	Republican	Competitive
Keating	Oklahoma	69	Republican	Competitive
Baldacci	Maine	69	Democrat	Competitive
Richardson	New Mexico	69	Democrat	Democratic
Pawlenty	Minnesota	69	Republican	Competitive
Kulongoski	Oregon	70	Democrat	Competitive
Sundquist	Tennessee	71	Republican	Competitive
Vilsack	Iowa	71	Democrat	Competitive
Schwarzenegger	California	72	Republican	Democratic
Janklow	South Dakota	72	Republican	Republican
Musgrove	Mississippi	73	Democrat	Competitive
Locke	Washington	73	Democrat	Competitive
Thompson	Wisconsin	74	Republican	Competitive
Granholm	Michigan	74	Democrat	Competitive
Blagojevich	Illinois	74	Democrat	Competitive
Hodges	South Carolina	74	Democrat	Republican
King	Maine	75	Independent	Competitive
Glendening	Maryland	77	Democrat	Democratic
Barnes	Georgia	78	Democrat	Competitive
Siegelman	Alabama	81	Democrat	Competitive
Shaheen	New Hampshire	82	Democrat	Republican
Schweitzer	Montana	85	Democrat	Republican
Easley	North Carolina	88	Democrat	Competitive

Substantive Content of Wordscores Scale

Table 3 on the following page presents the fifty most influential words for both Republican and Democratic discourse during this time out of the set of 12, 355 word stems that received scores based on relative frequency among the national and state platforms. The calculation of "influence" is a simple measure that multiples the scores of the words from the reference texts by their frequency of usage within the object texts. This captures both the extent to which a word has strong a partisan valence within the party platforms as well as how frequently governors use it within their speeches. It is important to note, however, that these observations about influential words and the inferred substantive dimension of this scale serve to bolster the face validity of the measure and are not, themselves, the reasons for the choice of this methodological tool. Those reasons are articulated in detail above.

Several interesting observations come from the examination of these sets of words, however. The first distinction that is readily apparent pertains to the parties' use of pronouns within their platforms. Democrats emphasize a collectivist, other-focused orientation. The top three "Democratic words" are "we", "our," and "you" while two of the top three Republican words are "I," and "my." This is consistent with Stanley Feldman's work on values in which he finds that, although there is a good deal of variation at the individual level, "Equality and individualism are somewhat correlated with party identification and ideological identification in the expected direction; compared to conservatives and Republicans, liberals and Democrats are somewhat more equalitarian and less individualistic." (1988, 427) It is also of note that the entire list of words is very similar to those produced by examining partisan discourse in other contexts using other methods (Monroe et al., 2007).

Table 3: Most Influential Partisan Words from Platforms and Speeches, 2000-2006

Top Democratic Words				Top Republican Words			
1	Our	26	Invest	1	i	26	hi
2	You	27	Creat	2	state	27	properti
3	will	28	Learn	3	my	28	depart
4	school	29	Famili	4	thank	29	health
5	must	30	everi	5	presid	30	current
6	thei	31	educ	6	am	31	initi
7	Do	32	mean	7	republican	32	week
8	more	33	commun	8	legislatur	33	she
9	All	34	Worker	9	governor	34	support
10	Job	35	cut	10	illinoi	35	serv
11	work	36	would	11	legisl	36	recommend
12	Get	37	colleg	12	texa	37	regul
13	believ	38	continu	13	feder	38	pleas
14	need	39	student	14	unit	39	result
15	should	40	gener	15	program	40	ani
16	teacher	41	compani	16	nation	41	reform
17	We'v	42	pai	17	congress	42	said
18	make	43	ask	18	provid	43	increas
19	We'r	44	don't	19	revenu	44	been
20	new	45	help	20	govern	45	leader
21	right	46	here	21	fund	46	tax
22	democrat	47	fiscal	22	last	47	propos
23	your	48	us	23	bush	48	project
24	Go	49	children	24	local	49	encourag
25	Can	50	standard	25	percent	50	individu

Generally, national discourse within governors' speeches may tap two latent substantive dimensions or a single latent dimension with two substantive categories. The first category I label "philosophical orientation." Along this dimension, Republican words emphasize individualism, Democratic words a collectivist orientation. However, when we move from the influential pronouns that drive these "philosophical" placements, the "policy orientation" dimension tells another story. Republican words refer to institutions while Democratic words emphasize problems and solutions. Table 4 below presents this typology.

Table 4: Two Substantive Dimensions of National Partisan Discourse in Governors' Speeches

	Philosophical Orientation	Policy Orientation
Democratic Words	*Collective* we (1) our (2) you (3)	*Problem/Solution-Based* job (5) school (7) work (14)
Republican Words	*Individualistic* I (1) my (3)	*Institutional/Statist* state (2) legislature (6) governor (7)

It is important to note that I do not have a theory that predicts this empirical array. This typology is not based on some structure deep within the word frequencies. These are qualitative rather than mathematical "dimensions."

The chapters that follow include extensive citations from these speeches to further demonstrate how the quantitative measure of partisan signal within governors' speeches explained within this chapter aligns with at least a summary qualitative review of the content of these speeches. Among other examples, Chapter 5 on public approval reviews three years of speeches by Don Siegelman of Alabama showing how partisan signal can change from year to year within the speeches of an individual governor. Chapter 6 on elections contrasts a speech given by Democrat Joe Kernan with one delivered by Republican Mike Johanns. The chapter that follows, however, starts with the discussion of a relatively moderate speech given by former Governor Frank O'Bannon of Indiana in 2000. In addition to the numerous citations from these and other speeches throughout the work, many of which directly

reference the words that help determine the partisan signal within these speeches, Appendix B includes the full text of the most Republican speech given by a Republican, Mike Johanns' speech to the State of Nebraska in 2000 and the most Democratic speech in the dataset, Don Siegelman's speech to the State of Alabama in 2002. These speeches are archetypes of the divergent languages of the two parties during this time; they are also representative of the standard content and structure of States of the State.

Chapter 4
Political Context

In 2000, the Democratic governor of Indiana, Frank O'Bannon, closed his speech with a call to state unity beyond the divisions of partisan politics:

> "Time after time, I've seen us get past our differences to do the people's business – and do it well. Because whatever divides us – be it geography, party or ideology – is never as strong as what unites us, as Hoosiers: A shared belief in family, faith and community. Our conviction that opportunity and responsibility go hand in hand. And our knowledge that we can overcome even our biggest problems by working together."

This chapter examines the connection between gubernatorial rhetoric and the political environment of the states in which the governors delivered each of these addresses. Is Governor O'Bannon speaking within a specific Hoosier dialect of speech, cueing voters in a way that would only be clear to longtime residents of the state of Indiana? There is an extent to which this is certain to be true. His discussions of state-specific policies and politicians will use terms that would be unfamiliar to all but the most attentive students of politics outside of his state.

Another central and salient aspect of Indiana politics, though, is the place that this state and its people occupy on the national political spectrum. The central theory that this dissertation tests is that the partisan signal Governor O'Bannon is sending through his word choices telegraphs a meaningful political orientation – not specific to his state – to which voters in his state will react. The passage above is particularly telling in this regard. In speaking to what is supposedly unique and special about Indiana, O'Bannon's word choices

are neither state-specific nor esoteric. They are boilerplate political platitudes, but ones that arguably stake out a position along a national dimension of discourse. He appears to be articulating a moderate to conservative vision of governance in which the people of the state are united by their commitment to "family, faith and community," and a belief that "opportunity and responsibility go hand in hand." This inferred orientation is consistent with the political environment of a state that is both somewhat more conservative (4.5 percentage points) and somewhat more Republican (5.3 percentage points) than the national average.

Computing a point estimate by relying on the word choices in all of the passages of this speech, Wordscores categorizes it as slightly more Democratic than the average address (1.4 percentage points) appropriate for a Democratic governor balancing his roles as leader of his party and of this state. When O'Bannon talks about the people's "business," and their shared "belief," he is using words[10] among the top 10% most influential Republican words. On the other hand, when he talks about "family," he is using the 29th most influential Democratic word and "opportunity" is in the top 10% most influential Democratic words. Further, his emphasis of a collective orientation through the pronouns is probably driving the slightly more Democratic placement of his speech. It is important to remember, however, that of the 2,633 words in O'Bannon's speech, over 90% received Wordscores placements. Therefore, as suggestive as looking at some of the most "influential" words may be, any individual word is not particularly influential, in and of itself, in determining the placement for a given text.

[10] Technically the actual counts are of word stems rather than individual words as explained in footnote 9 on page 51. The stem of "opportunity," for example, is "opportunit" and therefore also includes "opportunities."

A Case for the Plausibility of Wordscores

The previous chapter explained how Wordscores (Laver et al. 2003), a computationally simple method of quantitative content analysis, generates positions along a scale of national partisan discourse for 293 speeches given by 97 of governors in every state over a seven year period. I claim that these point estimates, what I call the "partisan signal" in gubernatorial speech, are a valid measure of the expressed political orientations of governors. To bolster the claim that these estimates are substantively meaningful, I showed that the sets of words that are the most influential in generating these placement are associated with substantive dimensions of discourse – for example, individualism versus collectivism – that align with contemporary understandings of the preferred rhetorical frames of the two major parties. That this is the case is not surprising given that Wordscores uses national party platforms as its reference texts to generate these placements. Committees at national party conventions explicitly design them to be reasonably comprehensive accounts of partisan policy positions and political frames. But does this language have meaning and relevance to state level analyses?

This chapter continues to build the case for this measure of the partisan signal in speech as a plausible and useful metric of governors' political orientations. It is not at all obvious that point estimates that reference a national partisan dimension – even one that includes additional non-federal language through the inclusion of platforms from the States of Texas and Washington – will have applicability to the study of state politics. Speech data are, after all, extremely complex as are the states in which the governors in this study delivered their speeches. This complexity may belie the usefulness of a unidimensional scale of rhetorical orientation across states. Does the use of collective pronouns, for example,

connote a meaningfully similar political orientation in Texas as it does in Vermont? Is the measure of the partisan signal in speech created by Wordscores truly related in expected ways to the characteristics of these diverse political environments? Or does it tap only a national dimension of discourse that is not relevant to understanding state-level political outcomes?

In the remainder of the dissertation after this chapter, I will articulate and evaluate a series of hypotheses that make causal claims about the connection between the partisan signal in gubernatorial speech as an independent variable and public approval ratings, vote shares and chances of reelection of governors as dependent variables. I will show that the word choices of governors – or, more precisely, the political orientations expressed through these choices – are vital to understanding their success or failure. In this chapter, however, the Wordscores themselves will serve as the dependent variable. My intention here is not to present strong claims that governors' speeches are created, in a causal sense, by the characteristics of their states. My goal is simply to demonstrate that this measure, a very simple scale extracted out of an extraordinarily complex set of speech data, is related to the characteristics of state political environments in ways both obvious and subtle. The hypotheses of this chapter build on the findings of many studies of state politics that, if they did not exclude governors entirely, almost always omitted the political positions that these governors stake out through their partisan rhetoric. Nevertheless, there are consistent patterns that emerge in these works, and I will look for these patterns to be repeated in this context.

In this chapter, I will show that the partisan signal in gubernatorial speech is related to common metrics of the political orientation of state publics. I will then demonstrate that

political cultures within these states condition this relationship in expected ways that are consistent with the manner in which these cultures influence the relationships between other state-level variables. Governors' partisan speech should also be related to their own partisan identifications. I present evidence that it is, and, further, that the signal in gubernatorial speech is related even more closely to their partisan identification in states where the party bestows a pre-primary endorsement on a particular candidate. Finally, I will evaluate the extent to which the partisan signal in these speeches is tied to a few important characteristics both of the governors themselves and of the states they lead. My intention is to increase the confidence of the reader that these Wordscores are not some mere abstraction that happens to produce the statistically significant, and substantively important, results of the following chapter, but rather that they are connected predictably and systematically to other central characteristics of state political environments.

Public Political Orientations

The first expectation I will evaluate is that the partisan signal in governors' speeches will be broadly consistent with the political orientations of their state publics as befits governors in their role as the leaders of their states. The central theoretical claim of this work is the that political fortunes of governors in the American states is explained, in part, by the extent to which they are successfully able to telegraph, through the language in their speeches, partisan signals that are advantageous given the political orientations of the public in their states. This chapter introduces different measures of these political orientations and examines, in general terms, whether they are statistically related to the partisan speech of governors.

When political scientists examine public political orientaitons, they often rely on the central role in our American political system played by both ideology and partisanship. Ideology, in the ideal sense, is a commitment to a set of principles about the relationship of the state and the individual. In practice, though, this attachment can be quite vague, primarily symbolic, and rather than a coherent system of beliefs anchored by actual policy positions (Conover and Feldman 1981). In the United States, the terms "liberal" and "conservative" anchor this ideological spectrum, and the number of self-identified conservatives has been steadily growing for several decades. Partisanship, on the other hand, represents membership or affinity for a particular political party, and the most marked trend at the mass level in recent years is dealignment or an increase in the number of people who do not identify strongly with the Democratic or Republican parties.

Partisanship and ideology are highly correlated with each other but they are not the same thing. Democrats, and Democratic state parties, are, on average, more liberal than Republicans and Republican state parties. However, there are vast differences in ideology among Democrats and Democratic state parties.

Though there are many different ways of quantifying these political variables, I will employ measures that are derived from CBS/New York Times survey data. These metrics were first introduced to the field by Robert Erikson, Gerald Wright and John McIver in a series of seminal articles about public political orientations in the states from the 1980s (1985, 1987a, 1987b, 1989). These authors assembled the collected findings of these articles into a coherent system designed to comprehensively explain state-level political outcomes in their book *Statehouse Democracy* (1993). Their measure of public ideology is "public opinion liberalism;" their measure of partisan orientation is "state partisanship."

Table 5 below presents the summary statistics for these variables, alongside the Democratic two-party vote in the presidential election for each of these states, another common measure of political orientations that I will also employ, when appropriate, as a proxy for public tastes in the chapters that follow. Each observation is a year in state during which a governor delivered a State of the State speech that is a part of the public record. These measures have roughly similar standard deviations and ranges. The Democratic two-party vote share from the most recent presidential election in a state is self-explanatory, though it is worth noting that state-level presidential vote was extremely stable between 2000 and 2004 (β= 0.97). The following pages discuss public opinion liberalism and state partisanship in greater detail.

Table 5: Summary Statistics of Measures of Public Political Orientations

	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	Range
Public Opinion Liberalism (%, CBS/NYT, avg. 1999-2003)	293	-13.23	9.14	-31.38	7.64	39.02
State Partisanship (%, CBS/NYR, avg. 1999-2003)	293	1.57	11.30	-25.62	20.68	46.3
Democratic Two Party Vote (%, most recent presidential election, 2000 or 2004)	293	-2.71	8.93	-22	14	36

In the structural models of *Statehouse Democracy,* the "prime mover" is state opinion liberalism. This variable influences the partisan composition of the electorate, of the legislature and, in turn, the liberalism of state policy outcomes. According to this account, understanding why states have long-term majorities of a particular party in their state legislatures or consistent outcomes of their state policy process starts with an understanding of where their citizens, collectively identify themselves along an ideological spectrum. For

each state, this metric aggregates the results of polls that include a question about ideological self-identification that requires respondents to choose "liberal," "moderate," or "conservative" as best representing their political orientations. The opinion liberalism score for each state reported here is equal to the total percentage of conservative identifiers subtracted from the total percentage of liberal identifiers, excluding moderates. That the mean value of these scores is -13% is a testament to the extent to which, during this time, significantly more respondents identified as "conservative," a label that has increased in its popularity for several decades (Erikson, MacKuen and Stimson 2002). For this study, I use the four year average of these surveys from 1999 to 2003, the most recent years for which data are available. Erikson, Wright and McIver (2007) recommend averaging these survey data across years as they contend that state ideology is stable over time and therefore that fluctuations in these data tend to represent random error that is reduced through aggregation rather than true change in state ideology that would be masked by examining its mean value from a multiyear time period.

If public opinion liberalism influences gubernatorial speech patterns as it does many other state-level outcomes then greater opinion liberalism in a state will be associated with a clearer Democratic partisan signal in speech. There are, however, at least two important reasons why we might not observe such a connection. Erikson, Wright and McIver have gone to great lengths to demonstrate that there is no relative change among the states over time in this measure (1993, 2001) and have challenged the validity of those measures that purport to demonstrate variation over time in public ideology among the states (2007, see also Berry et al. 1998, 2007). If opinion liberalism evinces great stability within states and presents no meaningful variation among states over time, then it may not be directly related

to a highly variable measure such as that of the partisan signal in gubernatorial speech. More importantly, though, this signal is driven by the partisan language within national party platforms that are not explicitly designed to anchor an ideological spectrum of partisan conflict and may avoid ideological language entirely. Remember that though partisanship and ideology are highly related, they are not the same thing. Table 6 below shows that state ideology is actually negatively correlated with the Wordscores of governors' speeches. Does this imply that the measure is not statistically related to important central characteristics of state political communities or merely that it is not directly related to ideology?

Table 6: Correlation Matrix of Public Political Orientations and Gubernatorial Speech

	State Opinion Liberalism	State Partisanship	Dem Two Party Vote	Gov. Party	Gov. Speech
State Opinion Liberalism (CBS/NYT, avg. 1999-2003)	1				
Party Identification (CBS/NYR, avg. 1999-2003)	.48 ***	1			
Democratic Two Party Vote (most recent presidential election, 2000 or 2004)	.74 ***	.78 ***	1		
Gubernatorial Party (1=Democratic)	.04	.12 *	.07	1	
Gubernatorial Partisan Speech (Wordscores)	-.12	.22 ***	.20 ***	.32 ***	1

Notes: N=293; OLS regression, * p<.05, *** p<.001

Another survey measure of state political orientations is the partisan identification of a state's citizens (Wright, Erikson and McIver 1985). The basis of this measure is the same as the measure of ideology, but in this case the percentage of Republican identifiers is subtracted from that of Democrats. Although state partisanship does vary meaningfully over long periods of time (McIver, Erikson and Wright 2001), I will use the four-year running average for this measure as well since the measure has not been updated since 2003, and the

estimate for any given year may be relatively unreliable for smaller states. Given the small sample sizes, these data do not include estimates of state partisanship for the states of Alaska and Hawaii. I generate values for these states on this measure by regressing partisanship on the Democratic two-party presidential vote for 2000 and 2004 (as well as the square term of the votes for each of these years) and inputting the predicted values for partisanship for Alaska and Hawaii.[11]

If this scale measures the partisan signal in gubernatorial rhetoric in a manner that is meaningful in most state contexts, then more Democratic speech will be directly correlated with a higher percentage of Democrats in a state. On the other hand, we may not expect state partisanship to predict the national partisan speech of governors. There are, after all, 102 political parties in the United States, and the Republican Party of Texas is very different than the Republican Party of Vermont. However, there is consistency within the substance of these parties as it relates to, for example, the content of the legislative agendas they advance (Fellowes et al. 2006).

Table 6 above shows that although the partisan signal in governors' speeches is negatively correlated with ideology, it is positively and significantly correlated with state partisanship, the Democratic two-party vote in a given state as well as with the governors' party. I will return to the connection with governors' own parties in the following section. The relationship of this measure of partisan speech to two important measures of partisan political orientation among citizens in the American states, though, is reassuring. It suggests that this measure of the words that governors use taps a similar dimension to that of

[11] State partisan identification and the presidential partisan vote by state are highly correlated (.78) during this period. And, at least for these two elections, presidential two-party vote and state partisanship are also closely linked due to the absence of confounding factors such as third party candidates who won a larger percentage of the national vote.

partisanship in the states. Future chapters will consider the electoral ramifications for governors of alignment with, or deviation from, the political orientation of their states. Whether that orientation is measured in terms of state partisanship or Democratic two-party vote in presidential elections will depend on the nature of the specific hypotheses. These choices will not depend on the simple bivariate correlations among these variables. Here, I present these results merely to validate the measure. Can we push this validation further, though? Do factors that have been shown to condition the relationship between public political orientations and elite political behavior exercise a similar moderating role in the context of this analysis of gubernatorial speech?

The Conditioning Effect of Political Culture

One such factor is political culture, a typology developed by Daniel Elazar (1966) that includes three distinct orientations towards the political process among citizens of the American states: "Individualism," "Moralism," and "Traditionalism." Elazar's explanation of how these cultures developed and why they persist is rooted in the cultural histories of the ethnic and social groups that first settled or migrated to each of the areas of the country; he argues that they have been made stable through institutions put in place to protect them. Such historical cultural categories may be increasingly anachronistic given the high mobility of people within the United States as well as the arrival of new waves of immigrants. However, scholars continue to find that this is a meaningful classification scheme that adds depth to political analyses of the states (Nardulli 1990).

This typology is based on the conceptions of the role of government held by state citizens, and these conceptions form the basis for a strong expectation that we will see a closer connection between gubernatorial speech and public political orientations within

certain political cultures. In individualistic states, politicians conceptualize their job as being the translation of public political orientations into public policy. In moralistic states, politicians remain attuned to public political orientations but are focused primarily on creating policy outcomes that promote "the public good." In traditionalistic states, politicians are members of an established social hierarchy and advance policies that protect hierarchical social relationships. Erikson, Wright and McIver (1987) find that the connection between legislative liberalism and policy liberalism, for example, is the strongest within individualistic states, weaker in moralistic states and nonexistent in traditionalistic states. They conclude that "individualistic states present the archetypal models of Downsian pragmatic politics" (1993, 175).

If the political cultures within which they have made their careers in public life strongly influence the behaviors of individual governors, then we will see in an analysis of speech the same patterns of differential responsiveness across political cultures. According to this account, politicians from individualistic states will approach construction of the rhetoric for their speeches in a calculating manner, believing that their job is simply to mimic the political orientations of their state publics, to respond to the participants of their political marketplaces in the same way that a company tailors its product to the specific demands of its market. Politicians from moralistic states, on the other hand, sometimes adopt policies that are inconsistent with public political orientations if they believe that these policies advance their own conceptions of "the public good." Likewise, governors in moralistic states may deliver speeches presented in language that articulates their own conceptions of this good, rather with word choices that merely parrot public discourse. Governors from traditionalistic states will be the least responsive as their continued participation in the

political system is conditioned primarily on being a part of an established social hierarchy rather than through the effectiveness of carefully constructed language designed to appeal to an attentive public.

Table 7: Conditioning Effect of Political Culture on Connection between State Political Orientation and Partisan Signal in Gubernatorial Speech

	Model 1 State Partisanship	**Model 2** Two-Party Democratic Vote
State Partisanship (CBS/NYT survey, 1999-2003 avg.)	.086 (.127)	-
Presidential Two-Party Democratic Vote	-	-.100 (.134)
Individualistic Culture (dichotomous)	-28.7 * (12.2)	-40.0 ** (12.4)
Moralistic Culture (dichotomous)	-7.25 (9.88)	-17.04 (8.94)
Partisanship* Moralistic	.170 (.189)	-
Partisanship* Individualistic	.448 * (.225)	-
Two-Party Vote * Moralistic	-	.370 * (.180)
Two-Party Vote* Individualistic	-	.642 *** (.234)
Constant	64.4 *** (1.17)	69.3 *** (6.94)
N	293	293
R2	.19	.19

Notes: OLS, robust standard errors clustered by governor; one-tailed tests, * p > .05, ** p > .01, *** p > .001.

Model 1 in Table 7 above shows that political culture has the same conditioning impact on the relationship between state partisanship and speech as it does on the connection between legislative liberalism and policy liberalism shown by Erikson, Wright and McIver

(1987). The relationship between state partisanship and speech is strong and significant in individualistic states (β=.534).[12] It has the expected sign but a weaker magnitude in moralistic states (β=.256) and a much smaller impact in traditionalistic states (β=.086).

Is the lack of correlation between the partisan signal in gubernatorial speeches and state partisanship being driven here by the fact that the majority of traditionalistic states are in the American south? In these states, large percentages Democrats may prefer the language of the national Republicans for whom they often vote in national elections. Model 2 allays this concern. The differential pattern of correlations among cultures is even more marked when examining the connection between the partisan signal in gubernatorial speech and the two-party Democratic vote share for president in a state. In Model 2, the connection between partisan speech and political orientation, here measured by Democratic vote share in presidential elections, is weakly negative (β = -.1) in traditionalistic states that represent the baseline category. Its effects in moralistic and individualistic states are almost identical to those in Model 1 (β=.27 for moralistic states and β=.542 in individualistic states). The Downsian pragmatic political connection is even weaker, therefore, when public political orientations in traditionalistic states are measured through voting in presidential elections.

Again, the goal of this chapter is not to make strong casual claims about the connection between culture and speech. The intent is to show that the connection between measures of the political orientations of state publics and this measure of speech is conditioned in a similar way by political cultures as are other important state-level

[12] Since the moderator is dichotomous, the coefficient reported here is the sum of the effect in the baseline category traditionalistic (β=.086) and the interaction term for individualistic states (β=.448). Throughout this work, I will rely extensively on the use of interaction terms, explaining their substantive interpretations when appropriate. For an excellent primer on the appropriate use and interpretation of interaction terms, see Brambor, Clark and Golder (2006).

relationships. That we see such familiar impacts is a testament to the enduring power of political culture to reveal important differences among the states. It is also additional evidence that the Wordscores measure reacts to and interacts with other state level variables in expected ways.

The Governor as Partisan and as Party Leader

Up until this point, I have been evaluating governors only in their capacities as leaders of their states and asking whether the partisan signal in their rhetoric is broadly consistent with the partisan orientation of their state electorates or the choice between candidates of different parties in national elections. However, governors themselves are almost always representatives of political parties, and one of their central roles is as the leaders of these parties in their states (Ferguson 2006). Do governors' own partisan identifications structure the word choices of their speeches? Do Republican governors, on average, choose more words from national Republican platforms in their speeches than do Democratic governors? Does the presence of pre-primary endorsements strengthen the relationship between governors and their parties? Finally, do these effects persist when controlling for the influence of the political orientations of governors' state publics described above?

There is strong evidence that the partisan identification of governors does help to determine the word choices within their speeches. As shown in Table 6 above, the relationship between governors' partisan speech and their own partisanship is stronger than the connection between speech and state partisanship. On average, the speeches delivered by Democrats are three points more Democratic in their signal than are the speeches of

Republican governors. This effect is significant at all conventional levels, but this variable explains only 10% of the variation in the partisan signal and is one third the size of the standard deviation of the distribution of these Wordscores (10.4). So there is more to understanding the relationship between governors' parties and their speeches than merely looking at the impact of their own party identification. State partisanship adds to this structure but so might the structure of state parties themselves.

The Conditioning Effect of Party Institutions

Are there conditions under which we might expect governors' partisan identifications to have a larger impact on the language in their speeches? Sally Morehouse (1998) emphasized the importance of party institutions for understanding gubernatorial electoral outcomes and explains that in states with pre-primary endorsements of gubernatorial candidates, "The endorsee goes forth with the backing of a party and the status and support that represents. Intra-party differences are accommodated before rather than after the nominating campaign" (1998, 179). If working out these differences is facilitated for candidates who express themselves using words that are consistent with the language of their national parties, pre-primary endorsements for governors will strengthen the connection between party identification and gubernatorial speech.

On the other hand, there are a number of other explanations for why candidates receive party endorsements. Morehouse also found that non-ideological factors such as personal networks of support from specific delegates as well as perceived frontrunner status are important in the pre-primary endorsement process (1998, 177-178). If endorsements are primarily a product of personal connections, rather than party dynamics, this institution may

weaken the connection between governors' parties and the language they choose. Pre-primary endorsements have become somewhat less common in the time since Morehouse's study, and I have updated this measure using data from a 2005 survey from the Book of the States (Council of State Governments 2006). The states with pre-primary endorsements during this time are AL, CO, CT, ND and UT.

The experience of Olene Walker, who was briefly the governor of Utah during this time, dramatizes the importance of these institutions. Walker became governor in 2003 when Mike Leavitt left to become administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. Though she enjoyed high public approval ratings and was the putative head of her party, she was not one of the two candidates placed on the ballot by the Republicans in the election of 2004. Many factors, including her inability to organize a campaign staff in time, may have played into this outcome, but some sources reported an important determining factor to have been, "the inescapable reality that some delegates say she was too moderate" (Bernick and Spangler 2004). Indeed, in terms of her partisan speech as measured by Wordscores, Walker was relatively moderate, delivering the 108th most Republican address for her only State of the State speech in 2004. This suggests that when parties choose candidates, they prefer ones who express themselves in terms that are more similar to those of the national party.

Consistent with this anecdotal evidence, it is the case that partisan identification of governors has a much stronger impact on speech in states in with pre-primary endorsements. Within these five states – in which governors delivered 31 of the 293 speeches in my study (11%) – speeches given by Democrats are 9.82 percentage points higher than those delivered by Republicans, three times the effect in states without such endorsements (in which the coefficient remains statistically significant at all conventional levels). Model 2 in Table 4 at

the end of this chapter presents the results of a multiple regression designed to gauge the conditioning impact of party institutions alongside that of political culture. The effect is strong and significant while controlling for all other variables. Again, speech appears an integrated part of state contexts, related through this measure to other important political factors through direct and conditional connections to its environment. Before I present and discuss the results of this model, though, I will review a few more characteristics both of the governors themselves and of their states that may be related to the partisan signal in their speeches.

Personal Characteristics of the Governor

Do personal characteristics of a governor also help to structure speech over and above the impact of political context? I will examine three such factors: first, the gender of the governor; second, whether the governor has an orthodox religious identity; third, whether the governor has political aspirations. Is speech related to these variables in the same manner as are other political behaviors?

There are thirty-four speeches by female governors in my dataset. The "gender gap" in the country as a whole has grown over the past thirty years, even accounting for other factors specific to each election (Box-Steffensmeier, De Boef and Lin 2004). While the country as a whole has gotten slightly more Republican, women have become markedly more likely to identify with the Democratic Party. If the female governors during this time are representative of this larger population – or if they were elected at least in part due to strong support among women who, as a whole, have become more Democratic – then their speeches, on average, will have a more pronounced Democratic signal. However, a great

deal of work has demonstrated (for a review of these findings see Dolan 2005) that voters perceive women as being more liberal and more interested in women's issues than are men. If the female governors in this dataset are looking to counterbalance this perception, they will, on average, deliver speeches that send a stronger Republican signal. Before controlling for other factors, the evidence suggests that female governors do deliver more Republican speeches. These 34 speeches are, on average 2.7 percentage points more Republican than those delivered by their male counterparts.

I also examine the impact of a governor's membership in a conservative religious denomination. Layman (1997) has shown that traditional political cleavages among religions have been superseded by ideological conflict between adherents of conservative and liberal religious coalitions. Governors who are Southern Baptist, Mormon, Evangelical Christian, Christian Scientist or Orthodox Jewish are coded as being personally religiously orthodox in this study. There are forty-six speeches by religiously conservative governors in my dataset. The rhetoric of Linda Lingle, the Orthodox Jewish governor of Hawaii helps dramatize these differences. Though culturally and religiously Jewish people are generally considered to be more politically liberal, from 2003 to 2006 Lingle delivered four speeches that were six percentage points more Republican than the average Republican speech. They were also eight percentage points more Republican than the speech of the Reform Jewish governor of Pennsylvania, Ed Rendell. However, Rendell's one speech from 2006 was also more conservative than the average Democratic speech suggesting that these cleavages are only a part of what determines speech patterns. A difference of means test show that the religious orthodoxy of these governors does appear to be associated with their delivering speeches that

more Republican by 2.6 percentage points, though this difference narrowly missed conventional bounds of statistical significance.

The main concern of most governors will be to tailor their speech to appeal to their state publics. However, there are other political constituencies that may impact the positions that governors stake out in their word choices in these speeches. In particular, those governors with national political aspirations may be less connected to their state constituencies or, at least, be willing to make certain trade-offs in the service of these progressive ambitions. Therefore, in my model I include a dummy variable for Democratic governors with national political aspirations as well as for Republican governors with political aspirations. To qualify, a governor has to have created an exploratory committee for a run for President or been appointed to a national office.[13] Again, the preliminary evidence confirms the expectation that these governors will deliver a clearer partisan signal in their speech. The governors with Democratic aspirations give addresses that are two percentage points more Democratic than the entire set of Democratic speeches, and the Republican governors addresses that are two percentage points more Republican than their Republican colleagues without such progressively ambitious goals. Table 8 at the end of this chapter

[13] The Democratic Governors who qualify in one of these regards are Howard Dean, Bill Richardson, Tom Vilsack and Mark Warner. The Republican list is much longer given George W. Bush's proclivity for appointing state governors to positions in his cabinet before their terms elapsed. Governor Tommy Thompson of Wisconsin became Secretary of Health and Human Services (and ran for President in 2008), Governor Tom Ridge of Pennsylvania became the first head of the Department of Homeland Security and Governor Cellucci of Massachusetts became Ambassador to Canada. Whitman of New Jersey left to head the Environmental Protection Agency; Leavitt of Utah, Health and Human Services; Johanns of Nebraska, Agriculture; Kempthorne of Idaho, Interior. Republican governors from this time period to seek the office of the presidency include Mitt Romney of Massachusetts, Jim Gilmore of Virginia, and Mike Huckabee of Arkansas.

evaluates these expectations alongside those that turn not only on the characteristics of governors but on other demographic factors of their states as well.

State Level Characteristics

Accounts that rely exclusively on partisanship may be incomplete; scholars have shown that sociodemographic data about state publics add to our understanding of state-level political behaviors beyond the impact of ideology and partisanship (Jackson and Carsey 1999). Carsey (2000) found that the issues that governors emphasize in their electoral campaigns have the effect of activating the identities of members of the electorate. For example, governors that stressed environmental issues were more likely to attract the support of women. I do not have strong theory that predicts that these cleavages should significantly influence gubernatorial rhetoric in State of the State speeches. However, I examine whether the partisan signal in these speeches is related to several salient demographic characteristics of the states: the proportion of the population that is African-American, the median income of citizens in a state, the percentage of citizens who identify as evangelical Christians and the percent who claim to be "pro-life."

There is no meaningful variation among states by gender composition but there is substantial variation on racial diversity (measured here in terms of percentage of African-Americans, a variable that explains significant variation in interstate political outcomes, see e.g., Hero and Tolbert 1996) and median income, two factors that have been demonstrated to be important predictors of the Democratic vote in models of gubernatorial elections (Niemi, Stanley and Vogel 1995). If race and class issues are related to gubernatorial speech, governors in states with larger African-American populations and lower median incomes will deliver speeches with a stronger Democratic signal. Beyond racial and class-based politics,

specific social issues can also bring citizens together and galvanize them into political action, and Conover et al. (1982) demonstrate strong elite-mass linkages on these issues. Their analysis focused on the importance of the Equal Rights amendment and abortion. Though the ERA is no longer an issue that animates political conflict in the states, abortion has remained salient. Therefore, in my full model I include controls both for the percentage of citizens who identified as pro-life in each state in 2005 as well as the percentage of Evangelical Christians in each state in 2000, another politically salient social category. My expectation is that in states with larger evangelical Christian populations as well as in states with higher percentages of people who identify as pro-life gubernatorial speech will have a stronger Republican signal. Again, I include these variables primarily as controls.

The Partisan Speech of State Governors in Political Context

Table 8 on the following page presents four stepwise regression models that build upon the discussion of this chapter. Model 1 includes only state partisanship and a governor's partisan identification. Both of these variables are significant at conventional levels while controlling for the other. I start with this simple model to allay concerns that these central findings are an artifact of the complex specifications of the models that follow. Model 2 demonstrates that the conditional relationship of political culture on the connection between partisanship and gubernatorial speech also persists while controlling for a governors' partisan identification. However, this connection remains somewhat tenuous except for within individualistic states. The relationship between party endorsement and partisan speech, though, remains quite strong controlling for partisanship, political culture, and their interactive terms.

Table 8: Influences on the Partisan Signal in Gubernatorial Speech, 2000-2006

	Expected Effect	Model 1 Context	Model 2 Conditions	Model 3 Personal	Model 4 State
State Partisanship (EWM, 99-03)	+	.177 * (.092)	.091 (.122)	.055 (.125)	.075 (.132)
Governor's Party (0=Republican, 0.5= Ind., 1=Democrat)	+	3.08 *** (.930)	2.95 *** (.918)	3.40 *** (1.03)	3.19 ** (1.12)
Individualistic Culture	-	-	-29.0 ** (12.4)	-34.3 ** (13.1)	-27.5 * (14.5)
Moralistic Culture	+	-	.653 (9.59)	-1.17 (10.1)	.895 (14.5)
Individualism * Partisanship	+	-	47.2 * (23.0)	57.6 * (24.8)	46.7 * (27.8)
Moralism * Partisanship	+	-	1.13 (18.8)	4.22 (20.3)	5.98 (29.1)
Pre-Primary Endorsement	+/-	-	6.87 *** (1.72)	6.29 *** (1.79)	4.71 ** (2.07)
Endorsement * Party	+	-	7.11 *** (1.66)	6.12 *** (1.82)	5.13 ** (1.71)
Gender (1=Female Governor)	+/-	-	-	-4.88 * (2.16)	-4.33 * (2.06)
Religious Orthodoxy (1=Orthodox)	-	-	-	-1.89 (2.07)	-1.86 (1.88)
Democratic Ambition (1=Progressively Ambitious)	-	-	-	-1.95 (2.62)	-1.23 (2.59)
Republican Ambition (1=Progressively Ambitious)	-	-	-	.933 (2.52)	.257 (2.58)
African-American (%, 2006)	+	-	-	-	20.6 * (11.6)
Median Income ($,000, Avg, 03-05)	+	-	-	-	.011 (.174)
Christian Adherents (%, 2000)	-	-	-	-	.068 (.091)
Pro-Life (%, 2000)	-	-	-	-	3.13 (16.53)
Constant		62.9 *** (.984)	64.2 *** (1.49)	65.3 *** (1.68)	56.5 *** (13.0)
N		293	293	293	293
R^2		.14	.28	.31	.33

Notes: N=293; OLS regression, figures in parentheses are robust standard errors clustered by governor; tests one- or two-tailed as indicated in table, *p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p<.001.

Adding governors' genders and whether they are members of orthodox religious groups adds only slightly to the explanatory power of the equation. However, the effects remain in the expected direction, and a governor's gender is statistically significant in its relationship to partisan speech. Controlling for other factors, female governors deliver speeches that are four percentage points more Republican, perhaps to counterbalance gender stereotypes about their political orientations. Although Republican and Democratic progressive ambition was in the expected direction in the bivariate cases, these variables reverse their sign and are insignificant in the full model suggesting that the impact of these ambitions are mitigated or negated by other more critical influences such as partisanship and party identification. Other state-level political characteristics also add somewhat little to our understanding of the determinants of the partisan signal in gubernatorial speech, although they act as another important control that increases our confidence in the central finding that both partisanship and party identification structure speech.

The tables on the two following pages present information on the relationship between governors parties, the political orientation of their states and the partisan signal in their speech in a simpler form. Table 9 lists the Republican governors as well as the partisan signal in their speeches, Table 10 the Democratic and Independent Governors. Here, I designate a state as "Republican" if it supported the Republican candidate for president in the most recent presidential election. As I explained in chapter two, using this national metric rather than a state-level measure such as state partisanship, though counterintuitive, is based on the fact that this is an analysis of the impact of national partisan speech. Though majorities of the citizens in Arkansas and North Carolina, for example, identify as members of the Democratic Party, their preference for national Republican candidates at the

presidential levels suggests that they may prefer national partisan language, a hypothesis that I will expand upon and test in the chapters that follow. The election models in the chapters that follow also account for the extent to which Democratic governors in the American South are uniquely cross-pressured when evaluating the ideal choice of words for their public addresses. The measure of "partisan signal" in gubernatorial speech in these tables also presents this information in a slightly different form than in the previous chapters, again for simplicity of interpretation. These signal scores are based on the Wordscores with a value of zero equal to the average Democratic speech. Therefore, for example, Haley Barbour, who became governor of the State of Mississippi after having served as the Chairman of the Republican National Committee has an average partisan signal score for his speeches of -13.5 which means that his speeches are 13.5 more Republican than the average Democratic speech. The median value of the partisan signal in the speech of the 32 Republican governors in Republican states is -4.7 whereas the signal in the speech of the 19 Republican governors in Democratic states is -1.9. This difference is in the expected direction but is not statistically significant due to the large variation in partisan signal in the speeches of these governors. Consistent with the finding that governors' parties are more closely correlated with the partisan signal in their speech than with the political orientations of their states, the median signal in speeches of the 19 Democratic governors in Democratic states is 3.8 whereas in Republican states it is 3.9.

Table 9: Partisan Signal in Republican Governors' Speech by Presidential Voting of State

Republican Governors in Republican States

Governor (State)	Partisan Signal
Barbour (Mississippi)	-13.5
Blunt (Missouri)	-12.7
Bush (Texas)	3.9
Daniels (Indiana)	-4.8
Fletcher (Kentucky)	-6.3
Foster (Lousiana)	4.3
Geringer (Wyoming)	-10.3
Gilmore (Virginia)	0.5
Graves (Kansas)	-16.6
Guinn (Nevada)	-4.1
Heineman (Nebraska)	-13.6
Hoeven (North Dakota)	5.8
Huckabee (Arkansas)	5.4
Hull (Arizona)	-12.6
Huntsman (Utah)	-6.0
Janklow (South Dakota)	9.0
Johanns (Nebraska)	-26.3
Johnson (New Mexico)	-8.5
Keating (Oklahoma)	5.9
Kempthorne (Idaho)	-4.9
Leavitt (Utah)	3.2
Martz (Montana)	-4.7
Murkowski (Alaska)	-15.0
Owens (Colorado)	-7.9
Perdue (Georgia)	3.2
Perry (Texas)	-6.7
Riley (Alabama)	-1.7
Rounds (South Dakota)	-2.1
Sanford (South Carolina)	2.6
Sundquist (Tennessee)	8.5
Taft (Ohio)	5.3
Underwood (West Virginia)	-11.7
Median/Std. Deviation	**-4.7/8.4**

Republican Governors in Democratic States

Governor (State)	Partisan Signal
Almond (Rhode Island)	5.1
Carcieri (Rhode Island)	-4.8
Cellucci (Massachusetts)	-4.3
Douglas (Vermont)	-1.9
Ehrlich(Maryland)	-14.5
Engler (Michigan)	-4.6
Lingle (Hawaii)	-10.2
McCallum (Wisconsin)	-8.4
Pataki (New York)	-2.0
Pawlenty (Minnesota)	6.5
Rell (Connecticut)	-8.2
Ridge (Pennsylvania)	-1.7
Romney (Massachusetts)	0.3
Rowland (Connecticut)	1.3
Ryan (Illinois)	-5.7
Schwarzenegger (California)	8.9
Swift (Massachusetts)	3.2
Thompson (Wisconsin)	10.7
Whitman (New Jersey)	5.8
Median/Std. Deviation	**-1.9/6.8**

Table 10: Partisan Signal in Democratic and Independent Governors' Speech by Presidential Voting of State

Democratic Governors in Democratic States

Governor (State)	Partisan Signal
Baldacci (Maine)	6.0
Blagojevich (Illinois)	11.5
Carper (Delaware)	4.6
Cayetano (Hawaii)	-8.0
Codey (New Jersey)	2.0
Davis (California)	1.1
Dean (Vermont)	-4.5
Doyle (Wisconsin)	3.4
Glendening (Maryland)	14.1
Granholm (Michigan)	10.9
Gregoire (Washington)	3.8
Kitzhaber (Oregon)	1.5
Kulongoski (Oregon)	7.4
Locke (Washington)	10.2
Lynch (New Hampshire)	0.6
McGreevey (New Jersey)	5.1
Minner(Delaware)	-6.3
Rendell (Pennsylvania)	-0.9
Richardson (New Mexico)	6.0
Median/Std. Deviation	**3.8/6.0**

Independent Governors in Democratic States

Governor (State)	Partisan Signal
King (Maine)	12.4
Ventura (Minnesota)	-5.2
Median/Std. Deviation	**3.6/12.4**

Democratic Governors in Republican States

Governor (State)	Partisan Signal
Barnes (Georgia)	14.8
Blanco (Louisiana)	5.0
Bredesen (Tennessee)	4.7
Carnahan (Missouri)	-7.3
Easley (North Carolina)	25.2
Freudenthal (Wyoming)	-31.2
Henry (Oklahoma)	-0.7
Hodges (South Carolina)	11.6
Holden (Missouri)	5.0
Kaine (Virginia)	-4.7
Kernan (Indiana)	-2.6
Knowles (Alaska)	-6.3
Manchin (West Virginia)	-7.1
Musgrove (Mississippi)	10.1
Napolitano (Arizona)	-2.1
O'Bannon (Indiana)	4.2
Patton (Kentucky)	-2.7
Schweitzer (Montana)	22.3
Sebelius (Kansas)	-2.1
Shaheen (New Hampshire)	19.4
Siegelman (Alabama)	18.2
Vilsack (Iowa)	8.5
Warner(Virginia)	3.6
Wise (West Virginia)	-0.8
Median/Std. Deviation	**3.9/12.0**

One consistent finding of the analysis of the data on the partisan signal in gubernatorial speech in both of these formats is that although the political orientation of states is related to the partisan signal in gubernatorial speech, the magnitude of this effect is somewhat small whether this measure of political orientation is state partisanship or aggregate voting behavior in presidential elections. In substantive terms, this suggests that the majority of governors may not target their speech directly to the political orientations of their states by choosing language that presents a political orientation that is proximate, in a spatial framework, to these political orientations. This does not mean, though, that governors are not targeting their speeches to the partisan majority, though, simply that they may not be taking moderate positions in order to do so. The chapters that follow evaluate the electoral consequences of the different positions that governors signal through the word choices of their speeches.

Chapter 5: Public Approval Ratings

Don Siegelman, the former Democratic governor of Alabama has had a checkered political career. He was recently released on bond from federal prison after allegations arose that his prosecution and subsequent conviction for alleged corruption was politically motivated. His public career had its share of ups and downs before his imprisonment, though. He won his first election in 1998 by the smallest number of votes in Alabama history. He was then defeated in 2002 in another extremely close election by Bob Riley, the candidate he had defeated four years prior. His public approval during his time of office, however, dropped by a much larger margin. Sixty-five percent of the Alabama public said that he was doing a good job in 2000, but only 43% approved of his performance two years later before he was up for reelection in 2002 (Beyle, Niemi and Sigelman 2002).

This decline did not bode well for his political fortunes. Public approval is, from one perspective, the measure of governors' political capital, their ability to effectively advance their policy agendas and their own political careers. High levels of approval are crucial not only for governors' reelection prospects (King 2001; Kenney and Rice 1983), but also for their success within the legislative arena (Ferguson 2003; Crew 1998) and for their influence with the bureaucracy (Woods and Baranowski 2007; Dometrius 2002). High levels of gubernatorial approval also reduce the likelihood that a strong electoral challenger will emerge (Brown 2007). This chapter examines which factors are the most directly responsible for changes in gubernatorial approval ratings, adding an account of the partisan signal in States of the State to other more conventional explanations.

The allegations that Siegelman had corruption dealings did not arise until after his tenure, though, so they could not have caused this drop in approval. What did cause this precipitous decline? It may have been attributable to economic factors such as a faltering state economy or simply be representative of the decay in public approval over time common to those holding executive office, and the models of this chapter gauge the influence of these factors. However, if citizens of the state of Alabama are attuned to the partisan speech of their political leaders and they prefer the speech of the national Republican Party – that has received the vast majority of presidential votes in Alabama since the 1970s – then the word choices in Siegelman's public addresses also would have played a crucial role in his declining levels of approval. Throughout his term in office, Don Siegelman moved increasingly away from the preferred language of the Republican Party. His addresses were the 73rd, 10th and 1st most Democratic according to the Wordscores measure of the partisan signal in political speech.

The following passage from his 2000 speech, which pertains primarily to education policy, is representative of his expressed approach in this year that balances the language and priorities of the national Democrats and Republicans:

> "In summary, my school accountability plan: Raises teacher salaries to the national average, gives schools and teachers the tools they need to succeed, and rewards schools that improve. But there's a trade off: We will streamline our tenure laws, cut bureaucracy and waste, and issue report cards on every single public school."

In 2001, however, Siegelman leads with much more substantively Democratic set of priorities. The discussion of accountability is gone in place of an increased focus on protecting teachers' jobs:

> "I ask you to join with me, to set up a special fund of $50 million dollars, to ensure there will be no teacher layoffs. NO TEACHER LAYOFFS![14] This must CERTAINLY be our priority. These are my education priorities: Putting kids first. Putting teachers first. Putting classrooms first. These same principles guide the legislative initiatives that I put before you tonight."

Throughout these speeches, Siegelman uses many different collective pronouns that are likely influencing the relatively Democratic point estimates of the speeches. The movement between the political orientations expressed in these speeches, though, is quite striking, even in a summary qualitative review. By 2002, his rhetoric and language have become significantly more social justice-oriented and far less focused on accountability. He opens as such:

> "There's one thing I've learned over the last three years. There are forces in this state fighting us each and every day, every step of the way - powerful forces, with powerful friends, fighting to put their narrow special interests ahead of the people's best interests. Since 1901, our constitution has enshrined their power, but I'm here tonight to let you know that I will fight them every step of the way, fight for our families, fight for our children, fight for our schools. I will fight to reform our constitution, take power away from the special interests, and give it back to the people. The people and I will fight because we are right, and the special interests are wrong."

Though it is certainly common for governors to complain about "special interests," and sometimes when governors refer to such interests they are actually speaking in code against teachers' unions, here Siegelman has taken up the standard of the Constitutional reform in Alabama. In the context of his state's politics, this is identified as a liberal, Democratic effort. In terms of its national partisan language, his speech extolling the virtues of this effort emphasizes the collective pronouns common to Democratic speech during the times period as well as Democratic words such as "families" (29th most Democratic), "children" (49th) and "schools" (4th). It emphasizes collectivism above individualism and policy solutions above

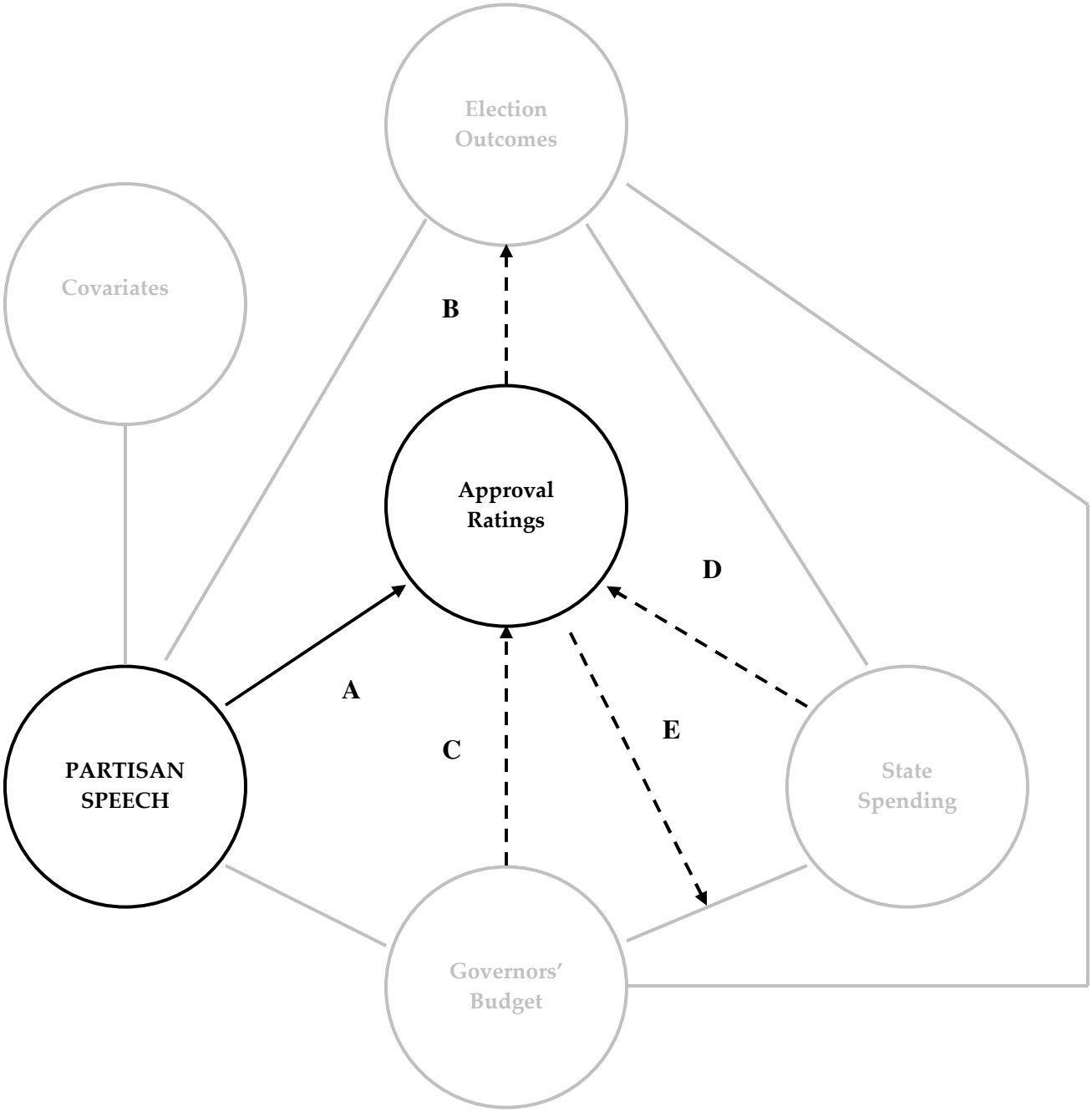
[14] Capitalization is from the public record.

references to the branches of government. Overall, it is the archetypical Democratic speech with the clearest partisan signal of any speech in the study. Although delivering such a speech was likely to endear him to Democratic partisans, particularly those involved in the Constitutional reform movement, it put him fundamentally out of line with the political orientations of the majority of citizens in Alabama[15] as expressed through their presidential voting. If the partisan political orientation that governors signal through the word choices in their speeches influences public approval, then the delivery of these speeches would have contributed to Siegelman's declining approval levels.

What is the nature of the connection, though, between partisan speech and public approval? Chapter Two outlined several different theories of political position-taking through speech that I will test within this context. Is Siegelman's lower approval a factor of his not having delivered a strong directional signal that was consistent with the political orientation of the citizens of his state? Or was this signal inadequately proximate to these expressed political orientations? Alternately, did Siegelman fail to stake out a partisan position that portrayed him as a bipartisan leader appropriate for an executive who is supposed to represent his entire state? This chapter will examine the direct connection between the partisan signal in gubernatorial speech and their approval ratings, the arrow marked "A" in Figure 6 on the following page. However, future chapters will also incorporate public approval into their analyses. In Chapter Six, I will include approval in my models predicting margin and likelihood of victory in gubernatorial elections, the arrow marked "B" in Figure 6. In Chapter Seven, I will investigate whether there is a connection

[15] In 2005, the citizens of Alabama voted overwhelmingly against changing their extremely regressive system of taxation even when this effort was championed by conservative Republican Bob Riley and cast in terms that emphasized the Christian duty of the state citizens not to overburden the poor.

Figure 6: Partisan Speech and Public Approval Ratings among American State Governors, 2000-2006



between recommended and actual fiscal policy outcomes during governors' tenures and their approval ratings, the arrows "C" and "D."

Political Speech and Gubernatorial Approval

Most studies of gubernatorial approval focus on the impact of factors that are, to some degree, outside of the control of these state executives. It is certainly the case that governors, as individuals, have very little influence over the direction of the national economy and, in spite of their central role in the development of the state budget, their actions likely have only a limited impact on the health of their own state economies. Governor Jennifer Granholm of Michigan, for example, in spite of being a competent and charismatic governor, may have seen her approval levels fall because the economy of her state continues to be decimated by the offshoring of jobs in the sectors, such as the automotive industry, that were the traditional engines of this economy. In spite of this lack of control, the public appears to hold governors, like presidents, accountable for the performance of the economy although there is some debate over whether and much debate over how the economy impacts approval (Cohen and King 2004; Crew et al. 2002; Hansen 1999; Adams and Squire 2001; MacDonald and Sigelman 1999). The section that follows will test the theories articulated within this body of scholarship. Likewise, a governor has no control over other factors such the year in their tenure or the approval of the president who shares their party identification (Carsey and Wright 1998) but these factors have also been demonstrated to be important, and I will also include them in my models.

On the other hand, governors have full control over the word choices in their State of the State speeches. Consequently they have a good deal of control over the image that they

present to the public *if* the public reacts to these word choices as an important measure of political orientation. There is some precedent to examining the impact on public approval of the images presented through the language in gubernatorial speeches. One important study of gubernatorial approval looked not at the political orientation expressed through the word choices but at the personality revealed through these speeches. Margaret Ferguson and Jay Barth (2003) develop a typology that includes three personality profiles, one in which governors are motivated by the desire for "affiliation-intimacy," another in which they seek "power," and the third in which their goal is "achievement." Although they hypothesize that the "affiliation-intimacy" personality type will be consistent with higher levels of approval, they find no evidence for such a relationship. They find, rather, that those governors who appear through their speeches to be motivated by a desire for power have the highest levels of approval whereas those who are appear, again within the word choices in their language, to be motivated by achievement to have lower levels of approval.

Though I do not include an account of governors' personalities here, it is interesting that state publics appear to award governors for speech that suggests a strong, politically ambitious personality rather than for speech designed to promote intimacy with state citizens. This finding is only suggestive within the context of this study of the partisan language in speech but may indicate that approval, generally, is associated with employing intense rather than moderate language. If the same dynamic holds for partisan language then theories such as the directional theory which emphasize the usefulness of clear partisan signals will emerge as better explanation for higher levels of public approval.

On the other hand, an important study of the connection between the language in presidential public addresses and public approval (Ragsdale 1987) emphasizes the

importance of language that does not antagonize opposing political factions. Lyn Ragsdale found that presidents generally experience increases in their public approval among both members of their own parties and of the opposite party after their States of the Union. The exception to this pattern was Richard Nixon who generally used these speeches to combatively engage with the opposing party and consequently had lower approval ratings among Democrats after he delivered them to the public.

This discussion, however, underscores the complexity of speech and speech data and some of the challenges of applying the findings of other scholars to novel studies that evaluate language within even a somewhat different framework. Is the presentation through language of a personality that seeks "affiliation/intimacy" with the public meaningfully similar to the presentation of a political orientation that is proximate to that of the public? Or might governors with power-seeking personalities ruthlessly and methodically tailor their appeals to what they perceive to be the political orientations of the median voter? Is there more to antagonizing a party than adopting the preferred language of its political opponents? On the other hand, one of the great virtues of speech data is this very richness that conclusions drawn from the study of rhetoric or tone can generate hypotheses for the examination of the political positions taken within speech. All of these diverse speech elements are, after all, present simultaneously in speech, mutually reinforcing or qualifying each other across different levels of substantive meaning and through different manners of delivery and performance.

Another crucial question here is whether it is the speeches themselves to which citizens are reacting. It seems relatively clear in the case of Lyn Ragsdale's study of presidential rhetoric (1987) that the States of the Union had a direct impact since presidential

approval is measured frequently and the impact of the speeches occurred immediately after the presidential address. Even in this case, though, it is unclear whether it is the language itself or merely the media's accounts of this language which may be slanted by the media's orientation towards a particular president. In the case of Ferguson and Barth's work (2002) it is even less clear whether it was the language itself that influenced public approval or whether this language merely revealed a personality and that governors with those personalities tend to have higher levels of approval for reasons entirely unrelated to their speech. Governors who are motivated by power may be more willing to do whatever is necessary to increase their approval levels whereas governors who deliver speeches that suggest that they are motivated by achievement may insist on achieving the policy goals they set out to accomplish even if it means becoming unpopular.

To unpack these connections as they relate to speech in this context, I examine, in the final chapter whether the partisan political orientation expressed through speech is consistent with the orientation suggested by behaviors in other areas of governing such as fiscal policy recommendations. This chapter, however, leaves aside the issue of whether these orientations are consistent with policy actions and therefore, to a certain extent, whether it is the speech itself to which the public reacts. Building on the theories introduced in Chapter Two, this chapter articulates and evaluates a series of hypotheses of the consequences of the political orientation revealed through speech for the public approval of governors. The dependent variable in these analyses, therefore, is the percentage of respondents to public opinion surveys who said that their governor was doing a "good" job.[16] These surveys are

[16] As Thad Beyle mentions on his website, these rating scales vary. "Possible responses will range from 'good, very good, fair, poor' to 'approve, disapprove,' and so forth. To make aggregation of the results possible, all responses have been collapsed into 'percent positive'

taken periodically by many different organizations across the states and collected in the U.S. Officials Job Approval Ratings Collection (Beyle, Niemi and Sigelman 2002). The following section articulates these hypotheses in the context of the impact of speech on public approval and explains how I constructed the independent variables that operationalize each hypothesis.

Hypotheses and Measures

Summarizing the research on presidential approval, the authors of *The Macro Polity* (Erikson, Stimson and MacKuen 2002) divide the micro-level theories that produce their macro-level expectations and results into two categories of evaluation of executives by individuals: those that pertain to "competence" and those that relate to "policy agreement." Evaluations of competence comprise both perceptions of management of the economy and the events and stories about the president that portray this executive as being successful and in control or unsuccessful and out-of-control. These explanations are important alternatives to the central questions about the impact of speech in this study, and I will return to them later in this section. I will start, however, with those hypotheses that relate to what these authors refer to as accounts of "policy agreement." Though Erikson, MacKuen and Stimson (2002) evaluate only the proposition that the public will prefer a moderate president, I examine four separate hypotheses related to the impact of the partisan signal in governors' speech on approval: the directional hypothesis, the proximity hypothesis, the bipartisan leadership hypothesis and the nonpartisan leadership hypothesis. These measures, however, gauge the affective reaction of the public to governors as much as their rational evaluation of

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and 'percent negative.'" More information about the data as well as the datasets themselves are available at http://www.unc.edu/~beyle/jars.html.

the political agendas they pursue. Table 11 below presents the summary statistics for the variables that operationalize these hypotheses as well as those that are pertinent to the competence hypotheses.

Table 11: Summary Statistics for Variables in Approval Analysis

Variable	Mean(SD) or Distribution	Min	Max	Range
Partisan Speech				
Directional Partisan Signal	.95 (10.3)	-28.4	39.6	68
Proximity Partisan Signal	7.9 (6.4)	.026	35.7	35.4
Bipartisan Signal	-3.1 (9.9)	-29.8	39.6	69.4
Covariates				
National Unemployment (%, lagged)	5.1 (.73)	4	6	2
Relative Unemployment (%, lagged)	.31 (.98)	-2.7	2.5	3.2
Term Year	4.1 (2.6)	0	14	14
Presidential Approval (%;complement for opp. party)	49.6 (11.9)	29.2	70.1	40.9
State Partisanship, Gov Party (CBS/NYT data, avg. 99-03)	1.3 (11.3)	-20.7	25.6	46.3
Scandal (1=scandal)	12 governors, 25 years (8% of cases)	0	1	1
Southern Democrat (dichotomous)	12 governors, 34 years (12% of cases)	0	1	1

Note: Each variable has 293 observations which are a year of a governor's term; see discussion below for explanation of construction of speech variables.

Directional Hypothesis: Governors' approval ratings will be higher in direct proportion to the clarity of the signal in their speech associated with the majority party in the state as measured by presidential voting.

As explained in Chapter Two, the directional hypothesis postulates that the public will prefer the politician who takes the most extreme, yet responsible, stance on the majority side of an issue. It does not necessarily follow that this strategy – even if it can be pursued profitably by politicians evaluating the most advantageous position to take relative to one or more opponents in an election – translates into an effective manner to increase overall public approval. Furthermore, the Wordscores measure of partisan signal does not measure politicians along a spectrum the two poles of which represent extreme stances. Rather, the two poles represent word choices that are mathematically equivalent to party platforms and, therefore, that are substantively equivalent to moderate – or at least mainline – political positions. It is also a measure of the *clarity* of partisan communication. The middle of the scale, therefore, represents the lack of a clear expressed political orientation along the national dimension of partisan conflict. The directional hypothesis as adapted to this context, therefore, predicts that the state public will prefer the most clear partisan signal that associated with the language of the majority party in the state.

Though there are important differences between the directional theory as it relates voting patterns driven by expressed political orientations along a scale with endpoints that represent extremes (Rabinowitz and MacDonald 1989) and to public approval driven by expressed political orientation along a scale with endpoints that represent clear partisan signals, there are also important similarities. As explained in Chapter Two, the basic insight of the scholars who developed the directional theory was to bring our knowledge of the information processing capabilities of voters into line with our expectations for political

outcomes. If the majority of voters think of most issues in a directional sense, of politicians as being "for" or "against" their preferred position, and if they react to symbolic language more than to precise policy details, then these politicians will succeed through effectively manipulating these symbols in the preferred direction of the political majority. Likewise, if state publics perceive governors as being either aligned with or hostile to their general political orientation and prefer those governors who most clearly telegraph this alignment through their word choices, then governors who deliver stronger partisan signals associated with the language of the political majority will have higher approval ratings. This is a somewhat different context, but the same fundamental insight about information processing among voters produces the same expectations.[17]

To operationalize the expectations of the directional theory in this context, I translate the Wordscore into a measure of the percentage point difference between each governor's speech and the mean score for the speeches in the dataset. This is a measure, therefore of the "partisan signal" within these speeches as contrasted with that of the average speech. These are the scores that I reported for each governor in Tables 9 and 10 in the previous chapter. The expectation of this hypothesis is that governors with the clearest partisan signal on the side of the political majority will have the highest levels of public approval. I use

[17] Further, if the political language of the partisan majority also represents the preferred language of the citizens of the state regardless of their partisan orientation then its use will increase approval among all citizens as it will be a signal that a governor has figured out how to effectively communicate in the local vernacular, symbols that have a high salience and a positive valence in a particular area. This would increase the affective bond between a leader and the public, a connection that scholars such as Edelman (1967) suggest is more important than the details of policy agreement. Gubernatorial approval surveys generally do not break down information on respondents by party identification. Therefore, I cannot directly test the predictions of inclusive approval gains in this context. I advance this theory to explain the manner in which the language of the partisan majority can also pay dividends for public approval among larger swaths of the state public.

presidential voting as my measure of public preference because this is a national dimension of partisan discourse and therefore the national political orientations of state citizens are more relevant to evaluating the appeal of this language. Presidential voting is a common measure of state-level political orientation (e.g., Rabinowitz et al. 2007; Jacobsen 2005). The assumption is, for example, that citizens in states that may have a Democratic majority in terms of partisan identifiers but that solidly support Republican candidates in national elections will prefer the language of the national Republican Party. The preferred direction of the majority is determined by whether a state's electoral votes for president went for the Democratic or Republican candidate. Only two states switched between 2000 and 2004 and the Democratic vote shares for these years are correlated at .98 so this is a highly stable measure of political orientation during this time period. The measure for this variable, therefore, is the unadjusted partisan signal for states that voted for the Democratic presidential candidate in the most recent election since higher values represent "more Democratic" speech that will, according to this hypothesis, be more appealing to citizens in these states in direct proportion to the clarity of this signal. Conversely, the measure of directional speech is equal to the negative value of partisan signal in states that supported the Republican candidate for president.

> *Proximity Hypothesis: Governors' approval ratings will be lower in direct proportion to the distance between the political position expressed through speech and the political orientation of the public as measured through presidential voting.*

Alternately, if the public prefers governors who tailor their speeches to appeal to the average political orientation in the state then governors who avoid strong partisan language will have higher levels of approval except for in those states that are nearer to the end of the

partisan spectrum. Functionally, this means that citizens in bellwether states such as Missouri will prefer governors to avoid strong partisan signals whereas citizens in states with distinct partisan orientations in terms of presidential voting patterns will prefer stronger signals in direct proportion to the strength of that majority. Citizens in Utah, for example, will prefer extremely clear Republican signals as a large majority of its citizens voted for the Republican presidential candidate in recent elections. The converse would be true, in this case, for states such as Massachusetts in which large majorities supported Democratic candidates for president.

To operationalize this expectation, I do not simply subtract the partisan signal in speech from the percentage of citizens who supported the Democratic candidate because I cannot assume that these variables are on the same scale. Therefore, I regress the measure of partisan signal on Democratic vote share for president and use the negative absolute value of the residuals from this equation as my measure of proximity speech. The proximity theory predicts that the further these absolute values are from zero – and therefore the expressed political orientation of governors diverges increasingly from the average political orientation in the state – the more that governors' public approval levels will fall. As I suggested in Chapter Two, the proximity theory of voting does not necessarily assume a high degree of political knowledge on the part of voters. It simply makes the assumption that instead of valuing intensity among politicians, voters value the ability of their leaders to telegraph an orientation that is proximate to the center, moderate if that center is moderate, more extreme if the median voter is also more extreme.[18]

[18] Alternately, the public may prefer for governors to avoid strong partisan stances altogether and pursue a nonpartisan speaking style that befits their role as head of state. More on the theoretical justification for this hypothesis in included in the following section on bipartisan

Bipartisan Leadership Hypothesis: Governors' approval ratings will be higher in direct proportion to the clarity of the signal in their speech associated with the language of the opposing party.

The successful governance of a state is arguably an activity that is less partisan than the act of running for reelection. One of the most important powers of governors is their role as the head of their states and their performance in this informal role is synergistically connected to their ability to effectively utilize the formal powers of their office (Ferguson 2006, Bowman and Kearney 2005). In the words of Barth and Ferguson (2002), "The governor's symbolic Head of State role is important in that it establishes an ongoing relationship between citizens and state government." A hypothesis that arises from the insight that effective leadership of an entire state is one of the central tasks of a governor and therefore, potentially, linked to public approval, is that the public may reward a governor who consistently uses language typically associated with the other party: a "bipartisan" language style. There is a further motivation for governors to use language that is counter to that of their own national party. Incumbents, in particular, may benefit from an ambiguous position that allows both partisans and potential opponents to assume that they share the same beliefs. The intuitive benefit of such ambiguous stances, though, has been called into question both within theoretical (Shepsle 1972; Enelow and Hinich 1981) and empirical literature (Bartels 1986; Franklin 1991). The variable for the bipartisan leadership

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leadership. However, although the nonpartisan hypothesis is theoretically distinct from the proximity hypothesis, operationally, they are indistinguishable within this dataset. Since the median voter in most states is relatively moderate, the absolute value of the residuals of the equation predicting speech from presidential voting are highly correlated (.95) with the absolute value of the partisan signal in speech. The expectation that we will empirically observe a proximity dynamic at play here is even stronger if the public prefers speech that is close to the political center because that speech is nonpartisan, or at least ambiguous.

hypothesis is the partisan signal for Republican governors as higher values on this measure represent more Democratic speech; it is therefore the negative value of this measure for Democratic governors.

Note that the "bipartisan" and "directional" measures are the same for the minority governors who will use the language of the majority party national platform according to both of these hypotheses. Thus, the measures are distinct only for the majority governors – the governors from the state's natural majority party. "Directional" predicts majority governors will use the majority language; "bipartisan" predicts that majority governors will use the minority party language. I reference the substantive difference of this distinction during the discussion of my results throughout the rest of this work.

Table 12: Measures of Partisan Speech

Theory	Hypothesis	Measure	+/-	Dir	Prox	Bipart
Directional	Public prefers clear signal in preferred direction	Partisan signal; negative value for Republican States	+	1		
Proximity	Public prefers signal that approximates state political orientation	Negative absolute value of residual of signal regressed on voting	-	.02	1	
Bipartisan Leadership	Public prefers signal counter to governor's party	Partisan signal; negative value for Democratic governors	+	.04	.34	1

Table 12 summarizes the discussion above and presents the correlations among these speech variables. The directional measure of speech is uncorrelated with the proximity measure of speech. What this implies is that all governors are not sending clear signals in the language of the party that received each state's vote for president. If they did, then the absolute value of the proximity measure would be highly and negatively correlated with directional speech. Instead, governors present quite distinct political orientation and pursue,

intentionally or otherwise, quite different strategies. This chapter measures the impact of these divergent speech behaviors on public approval. The directional measure of speech is also uncorrelated with the bipartisan measure of speech. What this implies is that states often elect governors from its political minority as measured here through political voting. If almost all states elected "in-party" governors, then this measure would be negatively and highly correlated with the directional measure of speech since these in-party governors would have to deliver speeches that were not directionally preferred in order to appear bipartisan. However, we know that states often elect governors from the political minority. The central goal of this study is to examine whether the political orientations expressed through speech are one of the central reasons why they do so. My conclusions about the importance of speech, however, would be spurious if I did not include variables that gauge other factors that have been demonstrated to have a strong impact on public outcomes such as gubernatorial approval. In the remainder of this section, I articulate these hypotheses.

Other Economic and Political Hypotheses

> *National Unemployment Hypothesis: Higher levels of national unemployment will be correlated with lower levels of gubernatorial approval across the nation.*
>
> *Relative Unemployment Hypothesis: Higher relative levels of unemployment within a state as compared to national unemployment will be correlated with lower levels of gubernatorial approval.*

Some scholars have found that state levels of unemployment influence gubernatorial approval (Crew et al. 2002, Hansen 1999) while other have found no discernable relationship (MacDonald and Siegelman 1999) or inconsistent effects (Adams and Squire 2001). Part of the difficulty in gauging the impact of the economy is distinguishing between the impact of

the state and national economic factors which tend to be highly collinear. Cohen and King (2007) suggest a resolution to this paradox by accounting for the influence both of national unemployment and the level of unemployment in a state relative to the national level. I will examine, therefore, the influence of national unemployment alongside that of relative unemployment in my model predicting governors' approval levels. These data are drawn from information assembled monthly by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. I use the lagged values of each of these variables to account for the proper temporal ordering. Since approval surveys are taken throughout the year, it does not make sense to suggest that unemployment in the fall of a year had an impact on gubernatorial public approval in the spring of that same year.

Scandal Hypothesis: Governors who are embroiled in a public scandal will have lower levels of approval.

Past studies of events during a governor's tenure have not discerned an impact of positive or negative occurrences on gubernatorial approval (Crew et al. 1992). This is inconsistent with research on presidents which has shown that events explain roughly 30 percent of the variation in these series (Erikson, MacKuen and Stimson 2002). The development of a comprehensive list of major public events during the terms of each of the 97 governors in this study is beyond the purview of this work. However, as one of the covariates in my approval equations, I look at the impact of gubernatorial scandals as these "events" often derail entire tenures and could dampen or eliminate the impact of all other factors. I use a rigorous definition of scandal which includes only those governors who engaged in misdeeds or mismanagement that received wide public recognition and media coverage. This does not include, however, political actions that happened to be unpopular,

such as Governor Schwarzenegger's slate of conservative-leaning initiatives that were defeated in California in 2004. These actions are a part of a governor's demonstrated political orientation, and it is the impact of expressed political orientation (both through speech and, in the final chapter, policy) that I am attempting to measure in this project.[19]

> *Coattails Hypothesis: Higher levels of presidential approval will be correlated with higher public approval for governors of the presidents' party and lower public approval for governors of the opposite party.*

A popular president is a boon to the members of his own party who can ride his coattails to higher levels of approval and greater electoral success. Conversely, an unpopular president can be an albatross around the neck of his own partisans who must struggle to distinguish themselves from the leader of their party (Carsey and Wright 1998). For the majority of this period, the Republican George W. Bush was the president of the United

[19] The following cases represent those years in which the misdeeds or mismanagement of a governor rose to the level of a scandal according to the coding in this dataset: Kathleen Blanco of Louisiana (2006) in the wake of her mismanagement during the Hurricane Katrina disaster; Gray Davis of California (2002) during the apex of the energy crisis that would ultimately lead to his recall from office; Ernie Fletcher (2004-2006) who was deeply damaged by a patronage scandal; Judy Martz (2001, 2003) who was the subject of constant ethical management allegations throughout her only term; Jim McGreevey of New Jersey (2004) who had an extramarital affair with a state employee whom he appointed to a Homeland Security position the employee was not qualified to hold; Frank Murkowski (2004-2006) who in addition to being involved in a series of campaign finance misdoings appointed his own daughter to succeed him as senator upon his election in 2002; Paul Patton of Kentucky (2002-2003) who had an affair with and then attempted blackmail the director a nursing home that was found to be in violation of many federal regulations; John Rowland of Connecticut (2003-2004) who served time in federal prison in 2005 and 2006 after having been convicted on a series of bribery and corruption charges; George Ryan of Illinois (2001-2002) who is currently in federal prison for a scandal involving campaign kickbacks from the illegal sale of commercial drivers' licenses; Jane Swift of Massachusetts (2002) due to her improper use of state resources for transportation and child care; Bob Taft of Ohio (2004-2006) for "Coingate," a major scandal in which millions of dollars of state money were lost after having been invested in the rare coin speculation business of a man who was close to Taft's administration; and Bob Wise (2003-2004) who carried on an affair with a married woman during his time in office.

States. Though it is not uncommon for presidential approval to decrease over the course of his terms in office (Erikson, MacKuen and Stimson 2002), this pattern was particularly marked for President Bush. During the first few years of his term, he was riding high levels of popularity in the wake of 9/11 and the successes in the early phases of the conflict in Afghanistan. Soon into his second term, however, his approval levels reached historic lows after the continuing lack of progress in the conflict in Iraq and the widespread public perception that the federal government could have performed more competently in its response to the destruction in New Orleans wrought by Hurricane Katrina. In this section, I evaluate whether this dynamic influenced public evaluations of governors according to their partisanship. In the model that follows, I use the complement of the presidential approval variable (100-x) for members of the opposite party. In 2000 and 2001, this applies to Republican governors as George W. Bush did not assume office until January 2001. In the rest of the years in the series, the presidential approval variable is its complement for Democratic governors. The results are identical to those produced by evaluating the impact of presidential approval on the approval ratings of Democratic and Republican governors separately. I also employ the lagged value of this variable in this model due to the same temporal ordering concerns that I discussed for the economics variables.

> *Approval Decay Hypothesis: Governors levels of public approval will be lower in direct proportion to the number of years they have served in their terms.*

Most studies of presidential approval reveal a natural decay throughout the tenure of these executives in the percentage of the public saying that the president is doing a good job. In fact, Erikson, Stimson and MacKuen (2002) remove this trend from their series before they examine the influence of other factors. This hypothesis suggests that governors

experience the same sort of natural decay that may be caused by a number of different factors including increasing disillusionment among the public that a governor has not achieving his policy goals or, conversely, the natural alienation of various interest groups from the tasks of making the hard decisions of governing necessary to achieve those policy goals. It is operationalize as a count of the number of years since the state of a governor's term.

> *Southern Democrat Hypothesis: As Southern Democrats are uniquely cross-pressured in regards to partisan speech, their levels of approval, controlling for other factors, will be greater or less than other governors.*

Southern Democrats are most cross-pressured particularly within the context of political speech. Most of the states in which there is a disconnect between state partisanship and presidential voting are in the South. The reason that I include a categorical variable for Southern Democrats rather than all Southern politicians as is often the case in models of state politics is that Republicans in the American South are not caught in the same bind. An examination of state party platforms (Weinberg and McHugh 2007) showed that Democratic parties in the American South tend to use language that is consistent with that of the national Democratic Party; the same is true for Republican parties from the South. Therefore, Republican governors can appease their constituents through adopting Republican language. Democratic governors, however, may risk alienating the activist bases who draft these platforms through the adopting of national Republican language even if this language appeals to the large number of Democrats in these states who vote for Republicans in the presidential election. Please note that I include this variable to address concerns about spuriousness of my results due to "Southern exceptionalism." A full account of the specific incentives and strategies of Southern governors is the purview of future research.

Table 13: The Impact of Partisan Speech on Gubernatorial Public Approval Ratings, 2000-2006

	+/-	Directional	Proximity	Bipartisan	Combined
Partisan Signal					
Directional Speech	+	.248 ***	-	-	.249 ***
		(.099)			(.101)
Proximity Speech	+	-	.013	-	.032
			(.160)		(.109)
Bipartisan Speech	+	-	-	.013	-.000
				(.124)	(.097)
Economy					
National Unemployment	-	-.552	-.454	-.462	-.559
(%, t-1)		(1.01)	(1.06)	(1.06)	(1.01)
Relative Unemployment	-	-4.68 ***	-4.24 ***	-4.22 ***	-4.70 ***
(%, t-1)		(.888)	(.906)	(.978)	(.905)
Other Political Variables					
Party (1=Democrat)	+/-	-1.41	-1.45	-1.46	-1.42
		(1.04)	(1.05)	(1.04)	(1.05)
Year in Term	-	-.200	-.290	-.301	-.194
		(.349)	(.353)	(.358)	(.349)
Presidential Approval	+	-.007	-.021	-.019	-.007
(% t-1, complement for opposite party)		(.052)	(.054)	(.053)	(.052)
Scandal	-	-19.7 ***	-19.4 ***	-19.4 ***	-19.8 ***
(Categorical, 1 = Scandal)		(2.67)	(2.73)	(2.72)	(2.67)
Southern Democrat	+/-	6.49 ***	4.04 *	4.04 *	6.61 ***
(Categorical, 1 = South)		(2.43)	(2.22)	(2.24)	(2.38)
Constant		55.8 ***	57.1 ***	57.1 ***	56.07
		(6.30)	(6.63)	(6.67)	(6.34) ***
N		293	293	293	293
R2		.38	.35	.34	.38

Notes: OLS, robust standard errors clustered by governor in parentheses; * p<.05, **p<.01, *** p<.001; unit of analysis is one year of each governor's term.

Results and Discussion

Table 13 on the previous page presents the results of four multiple regression equations testing the hypotheses articulated in the previous section.[20] The findings related to partisan speech are clear. I was able to reject the null hypothesis that directionally-preferred speech does not have an impact on approval and did so with over 99% confidence both in the model that tests the directional hypothesis on its own and a model combining the three speech variables. This is evidence that position-taking through speech is important even outside of electoral contests and during periods of governing and that the directional theory, so powerful for explaining election outcomes, also predicts public acclaim for a governor. Specifically sending a strong partisan signal on the side of the political majority is associated with higher levels of approval.

The standard errors associated with the proximity and bipartisan speech variables, on the other hand, are much larger than their coefficients. The proximity variable has the correct sign – the more governors diverge from the average political orientation of their publics the lower their approval ratings – but it does not approach conventional bounds of statistical significance. On the other hand, the bipartisan speech variable switches signs. Since this variable takes the same values for majority party governors, the distinction here is among minority party governors. What this implies is that minority-party governors are also benefiting from sending signals consistent with the language preferred by the political majority. I will discuss this implication in greater detail in the chapter that follows addressing the question of whether politicians can profitably employ language conventionally

[20] Standard regression diagnostics indicated that the results of the model were not heteroskedastic (Breusch-Pagan/Cook-Weisberg) nor was there an undue influence of outliers (Cook's D; no observation had a value greater than .5.)

associated with the opposite party. The rest of this section refers to the results of the combined model. The models that test the hypotheses independently are included here primarily as validation that the central result – the importance of directionally-preferred speech – is not an artifact of a model specification that includes the other variables.

What is the magnitude of the impact of delivering speeches that have a proportionally larger number of words from the platforms of the party that receives the majority of presidential votes in a state? That is to say: what is the advantage of emphasizing individualism in Texas, collectivism in Massachusetts; mentioning "schools" and "jobs" in Democratic states and "revenues" and "local" issues in Republican states? The effect is modest but meaningful. A one standard deviation change in directional speech, 10.4 percentage points, leads to an increase of approximately 2.6 percentage points in approval. As we will see in the chapters that follow, such change in approval can have important implications both for governors' prospects for reelection. To put the magnitude of this effect into context, a one standard deviation change in directionally preferred speech patterns has slightly more than half the substantive impact of a one standard deviation change in relative unemployment at the state level. One standard deviation in relative unemployment is approximately 1 percentage point and therefore its substantive impact is negative 4.7 percentage points.

The effect of relative unemployment is highly significant within this model, providing strong confirmation of the work of Cohen and King (2004) who also demonstrated that it is relative unemployment, rather than national unemployment, to which citizens react. Although governors still have limited impact over their states' economies, the fact that citizens appear to hold them accountable for the performance of their states rather than for

the national economy is reassuring from the perspective of democratic theory as it is more consistent with principle of accountability. Governors' fortunes rise and fall with unemployment trends in their states; they are not merely victims of national factors completely beyond their control. Though the coefficient on national unemployment is in the expected direction, it is smaller than its standard error. Likewise, the effects of the year in governors' terms and presidential approval are in the expected directions but do not approach conventional bounds of statistical significance. It appears to be the case, therefore, that governors approval ratings are driven by factors that are, to some extent, within their control.

What happens, though, when events spiral out of a governor's control and their public images are tarnished, perhaps permanently? As expected, scandal has a massive impact on gubernatorial approval. On average, governors embroiled in a scandal have approval ratings that are nineteen percentage points lower. The approval levels of some of these governors are impressively poor. In 2006, in the wake of "Coingate," in addition to a series of other lobbying scandals, only seventeen percent of Ohio citizens said they approved of the job that Bob Taft II was doing as governor.[21] The effect of being a Southern Democrat is also significant. Controlling for all other factors, Southern Democrats have approval ratings that are nearly seven percentage points higher. This suggests that those Democratic governors who deliver partisan signals consistent with the political majorities in southern States have even higher levels of approval, controlling for other factors, than governors elsewhere. What this means in substantive terms is that employing Republican language is even more advantageous in those states that support national Republican candidates but often have

[21] This was an ignominious chapter in the history of a proud Ohio political dynasty that included his great-grandfather President and Chief Justice William Howard Taft and his grandfather and father who were both U.S. Senators. It set the stage for the rise to power of the Democrats whose party had been in disarray in this state for well over a decade.

majority of Democratic partisan identifiers. I discuss this paradox more fully in the conclusion to this work.

This is just the first piece in understanding the relationship between the partisan signal in the speech of governors and their public fortunes. In the chapters that follow, I will evaluate the impact of partisan speech on electoral outcomes as well as the extent to which this speech aligns with political orientations as expressed through other governing behaviors. In the study of elections, the predictive power of position-taking theory is well established. It is somewhat more surprising to find that the directional theory of politics appears to be at work here as well. It might seem that partisan position-taking strategies would be less useful outside of elections when bipartisan compromise is often necessary for governing or for working with a legislature that is controlled by the opposite party. However, once again, within this analysis, as has been shown to be the case in elections, the public rewards politicians who deliver strong, clear signals rather than those who avoid such intense positions. Delivering speeches that have clear partisan signals on the side of the political majority is associated with higher levels of approval.

These findings are also somewhat surprising in their implications for the levels of political information that state publics appear to have about their governors even outside of the relatively higher-information environments of political campaigns. These results imply that the political orientations that governors present to the public through the word choices in their States of the State influence public evaluation of these governors. Even if these specific speeches are representative of a larger body of political rhetoric delivered by governors throughout the year, it is still an indication that the governors are delivering and the public is reacting to partisan signals within speech. This finding is particularly important for our

understanding of the extent to which voters appear attuned to the partisan orientation of their politicians, particularly if these word choices reveal an orientation that is separate than the one that is suggested by the governing actions of state executives, a question I will address in the final chapter of this work.

After decades of research that concluded that the public was almost entirely ignorant about politicians and politics, the results contribute to the body of scholarship that demonstrates a rational and systematic connection between the public and its elected officials. Does this connection, however, simply represent a general affinity of state publics for politicians who have learned to community effectively within the local vernacular or do these political positions contained within word choices in language also have an impact on electoral outcomes? Don Siegelman's levels of public approval were decreased by his choice to send a strong signal through his speech that was increasingly inconsistent with the orientation of the political majority in his state. Did the Democratic partisan signal in his speech have a similar negative impact on his vote share in his reelection effort and, consequently, on his likelihood of retaining his office? Does the partisan signal in speech also contribute to determining the electoral fortunes of all governors or is its impact mitigated or eliminated by the impact of economics, campaign spending and other factors? It is to these questions that I turn in the next chapter.

Chapter 6: Elections Involving Incumbents

In January of 2006, a chastened Arnold Schwarzenegger delivered his State of the State speech in front of a joint session of the California legislature. The previous year, his slate of reform-minded ballot initiatives had gone down to defeat in a special election. Although he had lost this electoral contest, his political skills had not abandoned him, and he delivered a speech targeted to reposition himself as the leader of a state that has ten percentage points more Democrats than Republicans and where a majority of voters had supported the Democratic candidate in the previous four presidential elections. The beginning of his speech showcases his newfound humility:

> "I've thought a lot about the last year and the mistakes I made and the lessons I've learned. … I didn't hear the majority of Californians when they were telling me they didn't like the special election. I barreled ahead anyway when I should have listened. ... And the people, who always have the last word, sent a clear message – cut the warfare, cool the rhetoric, find common ground and fix the problems together. So to my fellow Californians, I say – message received."

What was his actually response to this message, though? Did he cut the partisan words out of his speeches entirely or did he change his tune to one that would simply be more efficacious, if equally as political? At least according to an account of the partisan signal in his speech, instead of "cooling" his rhetoric, he retooled it to appeal to those people he had to work with and whose votes he had to win back – the large Democratic majorities in the legislature and in the public – and did so very effectively. According to the Wordscores measure, Governor Schwarzenegger's 2006 speech was the 5th most Democratic speech out of this set of 293 speeches. This was a continuation of a trend in

the partisan signal in his speeches towards a greater emphasis on the use of words from Democratic Party platforms. His 2004 speech was the 182nd most Democratic speech and his 2005 speech was the 80th most Democratic. By 2006, his rhetoric was almost a caricature of traditional Democratic Party preferences for more governmental spending (Stimson 1991) and contains words such as "schools" and "teachers" that are identified as Democratic according to the Wordscores measure:

> "Our systems are at the breaking point now. We need more roads, more hospitals, more schools, more nurses, more teachers, more police, more fire, more water, more energy, more ports... more, more, more"

The Democratic majority in the California electorate appears to have received these clear partisan cues: in what was otherwise a terrible year for Republicans across the nation, Schwarzenegger was reelected by a healthy margin.

There are many reasons for any gubernatorial victory, and celebrity status may have played a role in this one alongside a healthy state economy. The central claim of this work, though, is there is more to understanding electoral returns than gauging the impact of candidate quality, campaign finance and state economic performance. Specifically, governors – intentionally or otherwise[22] – present a political orientation to their state publics through the word choices in their public addresses. The public receives these signals and evaluates governors on the basis of them. States reward those politicians who send signals that are consistent with the political orientations of the majority of the public. As an actor, long accustomed to playing roles in a manner designed to promote public acclaim, Schwarzenegger understood this dynamic and

[22] As explained in greater detail in Chapter Two, this work does not assume that this behavior among governors amounts to rational utility maximization. I evaluate the consequences of the partisan signal in gubernatorial speech, costs or benefits that accrue regardless of whether governors are aware of the signals they are sending.

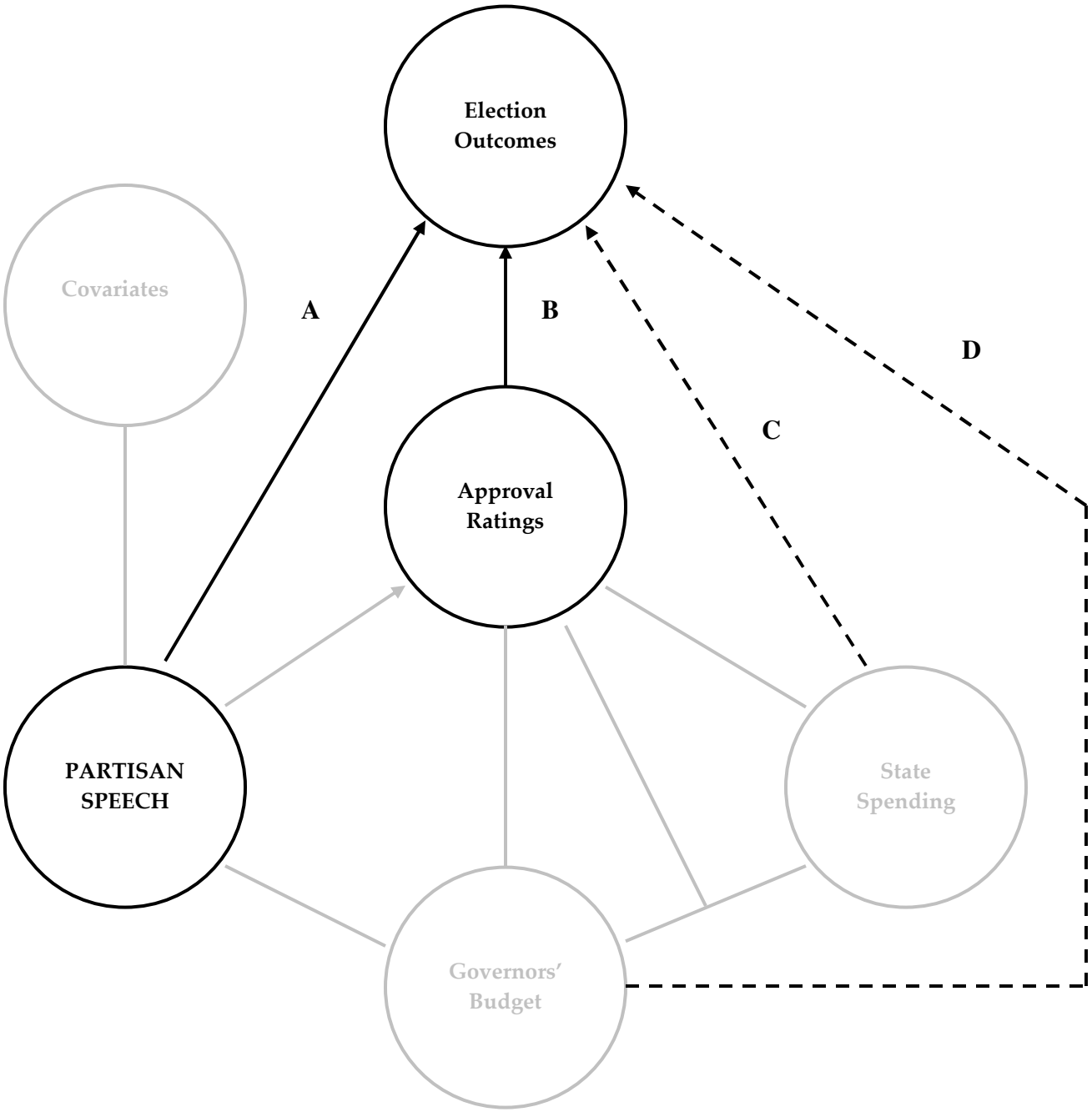
publicly chastised his fellow California Republicans for not couching their policy proposals in more moderate terms (Martelle 2007).

In this chapter, I situate my analysis of the implications of partisan signal in gubernatorial speech more precisely within the literature on gubernatorial elections. I then introduce additional hypotheses that are germane to the study of elections and construct models that incorporate the influence of partisan speech into our understanding of the determinants first of incumbent governors' vote shares and then of their chances for reelection. The focus on this chapter is, therefore, on the arrow marked "A," on Figure 1 on the following page. The influence of partisan speech – and that of economics, campaign spending, challenger quality and other factors relevant to understanding electoral outcomes – is evaluated alongside the impact of public approval,[23] arrow B in Figure 7.

Again, the influence of policy recommendations of governors and policy outcomes in the states, the arrows marked "C" and "D," are excluded from these models. I turn to policy in the next chapter. However, Arnold Schwarzenegger's admonition to his fellow politicians that they needed to change the way in which they framed their policy positions, rather than changing the positions themselves, foreshadows the findings of this final chapter that strongly emphasize the power of partisan speech for influencing public evaluations of politics, perhaps to the exclusion of actual policy recommendation and outcomes. The final chapter will present the full structural model that displays the fully specified relationship between approval, elections, policy, and partisan speech.

[23] Independent of the influence of these variables on approval or reasons that I will articulate more fully in the hypotheses section.

Figure 7: Partisan Speech, Fiscal Policy, Public Approval Ratings and Election Outcomes among American State Governors, 2000-2006



Political Orientation and the Study of Gubernatorial Elections

The central finding of the analyses of the previous chapter on gubernatorial approval was that state publics appear to react to the political orientations that governors stake out through the choice of words in their speeches. Specifically, higher levels of public approval are associated with governors' using proportionally more words in their States of the State from the platforms of the party that received their states' electoral votes in the most recent presidential election. This evidence was consistent with the expectations of the "directional theory" of political evaluations (Rabinowitz and MacDonald 1989) in which voters place a premium on strong signals on their preferred side of the issue. The predictions of this theory diverge from those of the "proximity theory" of politics (Downs 1957; Davis, Hinich, and Ordeshook 1970; Hinich and Munger 1994) in which politicians are successful if they present, through their behaviors, close approximations of the – generally moderate – political orientation of the median voter in their areas.

On the one hand, the confirmation of the directional theory of politics in the analysis of the determinants of approval ratings was unsurprising since the directional theory of public evaluations of politicians has a solid psychological grounding that is consistent with our understanding of the information processing techniques of voters. Further, the Wordscores measure may be ideally suited as a test of a theory that predicts that politicians' success will turn on the manipulation of political symbols since it is a measure of symbolic speech rather than of substantive policy behavior. On the other hand, though, the directional theory was developed to predict the outcome of elections (Rabinowitz and MacDonald 1989). It has never been shown to explain higher levels of

gubernatorial approval, and there are many reasons – articulated above and expanded upon below – why governors may want to avoid strong partisan signals within their speech if they are to effectively build larger coalitions to govern their politically diverse states and to increase their levels of political support among a broader swath of the public.

Building on the last chapter's approval analysis, this chapter focuses first on the determinants of the vote shares earned by incumbent governors in their reelection efforts and, second, on the likelihood of their victories in these contests. Evaluating the predictive power of theories of political position-taking is much more common in the study of elections. The second chapter presented these position-taking strategies in detail and explained how the theory can apply to word choices within public addresses as well as to the study of voting behavior in legislatures. The chapter presented evidence that the channels of communication are open between governor and public and that there are similar patterns, content, and language in these speeches which suggests that governors deliver political signals along a common national dimension. The third chapter described in detail how to measure political orientations along this national dimension by comparing the speeches of governors to the language of party platforms.

A clear contrast between the directional and proximity theories of position-taking and how they translate into political speech is provided by examining how Mike Johanns, a former governor of Nebraska, began his speech with how Joseph Kernan, a former governor of Indiana ended his. Governor Johanns' speech from 2000 contains, according to the Wordscores measures, the 2nd most pronounced Republican signal, and this mathematically-derived placement would be no surprise to any reader with even a

passing knowledge of the contemporary American political debate. He begins his address as such:

> "One year ago, I came before you to present my first State of the State Address. I shared with you a blueprint for implementing a vision of less government, lower taxes, protecting our families, and building our economy. … [T]he budget we agreed on was based on the principles of spending restraint, funding our priorities, and providing tax relief. We achieved the most conservative spending growth in our state's budget in a decade, a renewed commitment to providing services that ensure a continued quality of life for our citizens, and provided more than $105 million dollars in tax relief measures."

Its message could hardly have been lost on those that heard it in person. For example, both in terms of popular understanding and in terms of the Wordscores measure, "tax" and the words for which it is a stem are salient words for identifying Republican speech. An account of word usage, though, is a powerful but imprecise proxy for the actual substantive content of speeches, the policy frames, soundbites, and rhetorical tropes that stick in voters' minds to influence their evaluations of politicians. Johann's address is full of the sort of passages and phrases that likely eased the translation of political philosophy into clear media coverage and framing to transmit its message to the broader Nebraska state public. The article that summarized the speech within the pages of the Lincoln Journal-Star was entitled "Governor seeks more tax relief" and contains the following passage:

> "But Johanns said the budget remains conservative. 'It really is a lean budget. The year before, spending growth was 12 percent," he said. 'We really, truly have reduced the level of spending.'"

Other politicians pursued contrasting strategies that avoided such strong partisan signals. In 2004, Joe Kernan had recently taken over as Governor of Indiana after the passing of Frank O'Bannon whose speeches were excerpted in the second chapter.

Kernan presented a more moderate image to the public of Indiana than did Johanns to the public of Nebraska. According to the Wordscores measure of political speech, Kernan is solidly in the middle of the distribution, delivering a speech that was only two percentage points more Republican than the average speech, the 117th most Republican speech in the entire dataset. Though States of the State frequently conclude with a passage approximating the following set of political bromides, in this case these lines are representative of an entire address in which Kernan focused on working together across political parties and in which he avoided loaded partisan language.

> "There is a future, a great future, one built on our achievements, one based on our potential, one guided by our vision. Indiana will be that place where Hoosiers will have good paying jobs, where our children are safe and prepared to be successful, where all have access to a world class education, and where people will want to live. This is my mission. … I'm ready to do all I can, working with all of you. So, let's get to work. And let's do our work well. That's who we are. That's who we have always been."

Both Nebraska and Indiana solidly supported Republican presidential candidates during this time. In response to this political environment, the language of Johanns and Kernan represents two distinctly different rhetorical strategies: Johanns, a clear partisan signal, Kernan, moderation. Though these cases are only illustrative since they represent two data points, it is worth noting that Johanns remained popular throughout his terms of office, was reelected by a large margin and eventually ascended to lead the Department of Agriculture under President George W. Bush whereas Joe Kernan, though relatively popular, went into political retirement after losing the next gubernatorial election to Mitch "The Knife" Daniels, Bush's former budget director.

Most previous studies of gubernatorial elections have included at least an implicit assumption that state publics prefer a certain political orientation. Aggregate-level

studies of elections involving governors returns often include, for example, the "normal vote" in a state which suggests that, "The more successful the incumbent's party in prior general elections, the larger the current incumbent's share of the vote should be" (Bardwell 2005). This hypothesis has an intuitive appeal, particularly if we conflate partisan identification with political orientation. A state that has preferred Democratic governors in the past may be likely to support them in the future.

Tellingly, though, these studies rarely find "normal vote" to be a significant predictor of gubernatorial election returns (e.g. Erikson, Wright and McIver 1993). The simple explanation is that there is no "normal vote" for governor. This is, in fact, the theoretical puzzle that is at the heart of this work: Control of the governor's office routinely switches back and forth between the two parties, even in states with large majorities for a single party and in which states legislatures almost never change hands. However, the political orientation of governors may still be quite important in determining aggregate electoral returns. All that these results suggest is that party identification may not be a particularly strong proxy for the political orientations on which public evaluations are based.

Individual-level studies of gubernatorial elections also contain the implicit assumption that political orientations of governors matter. For example, Niemi, Stanley and Vogel (1995) show that party identifications of voters, their ideologies, their race, and their union membership status influence their vote patterns. Republicans, conservatives, whites and non-union households are all, on average, more likely to vote for a Republican candidate for governor. These results are unsurprising; we would know very little indeed about the structure of voting in contemporary American political life if

these hypotheses were not confirmed. For example, voters are 25% more likely to support the Republican candidate for governor if they are Republicans. From one perspective, the magnitude of this effect is quite great. On the other hand, it leaves quite a bit of variation in voting behavior to be explained, and in their model and in others (e.g. Carsey and Wright 1998; Atkeson and Partin 1995; Brace 1991) hypotheses that evaluate the impact of the economy also emerge as significant predictors of vote choice as do evaluations of the impacts of presidential approval, incumbency, voters' personal financial situations, and governors' choice to raise taxes.

What these on average results do not tell us, though, is how the likelihood of voters is affected by their partisan and personal characteristics *given* the expressed political orientations of governors. Though this is not an individual-level study, the implicit individual-level theory is that Republican voters are, on average, more likely to support Republican gubernatorial candidates but are even more likely to support Republican candidates who deliver clear Republican signals within their speeches. Similarly, union members are, on average, less likely to support Republican gubernatorial candidates but are somewhat more likely to do so if these Republicans deliver moderate to strong Democratic signals within their speeches.

This proposition is not merely hypothetical: governors who utilize words found more frequently in the platform of the opposite party exist in greater numbers.[24] For example, in addition to Arnold Schwarzenegger, Republican governors who have been successful – sometimes very successful – within Democratic states where they would have to win at least some portion of the Democratic vote are plentiful within this dataset

[24] A full list of all governors, their partisan orientation and the partisan signal in their speech is included at the end of Chapter Four.

and time period. This group includes Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota (whose speeches are, on average, 6.7 percentage points more Democratic than the average speech), Tommy Thompson of Wisconsin (+ 10.7 percentage points), and Christine Todd Whitman (+5.8).

There is other evidence to suggest that state voters are attuned to the political appeals made by governors and that governors attempt to exploit, in the course of the development of their public communication strategies, what they know about the political make-up of their states. One extensive study of the implications of gubernatorial speech within political campaigns (Carsey 2000) demonstrated that individuals' vote choices are influenced by the subject areas of governors' campaign advertisements and other public pronouncements during these electoral contests. If governors stressed the issue of abortion, for example, voters' Catholicism played a larger role in structuring their vote choice.

Although Carsey's study did not include a measure of partisan signal in gubernatorial speech as such, the underlying question is the same: What language – be it the choice to discuss certain policy issues or to frame the discussion of these issues in charged political language – is it profitable for politicians to adopt? Democratic governors may pursue the heresthetic strategy (Riker 1980) of choosing to focus on issues that are traditional strengths for their party such as the alleviation of poverty and health care policy; in states with large Republican majorities, this may lead to their election particularly in years in which the electorate is attuned to these issues. This is not the only move available to these Democrats, however, to attempt – through language - to overcome this built-in disadvantage. Another oratorical strategy they may pursue, therefore, is to adopt the language of the Republican political majority therefore reducing

some of the affective advantage enjoyed by Republican governors who can paint as political outsiders Democrats who "talk like Democrats." Democrats who "talk like Republicans" may not be as vulnerable to such affective appeals that emphasize the extent to which they are out of step with the values of a state engrained in the preferred word choices and patterns of language of the partisan majority. We see evidence of this strategy in this period. The governors in this study, if they are aware of the partisan political orientation they are presenting through their speech, appear to believe that it can be politically advantageous to deliver speeches with language that is atypical for their parties: the median value for partisan signal in the speech of Republican governors in states that supported the Democratic candidate in the most recent presidential election is three percentage points more Democratic than the median for Republican governors in Republican states.

Ideally, an analysis of the implications of the position-taking strategies of politicians would contrast the advantage of a particular orientation presented through language with that of another chosen by an opposed politician within a competitive political environment. Tests of the proximity and directional theories do this. Since State of the States speeches have not, generally, been delivered by challengers in gubernatorial elections, though – except for in such extremely rare cases, such as that of Tony Knowles of Alaska, in which a former governor ran for election again after having been defeated – this study does not contrast the political orientations of gubernatorial incumbents with those of their challengers. It does, however, include a more explicit account of the implications of political position-taking among incumbent governors running for

reelection than did previous studies. It incorporates and builds upon the hypotheses and findings of these studies.

An Analysis of Partisan Speech and Gubernatorial Elections

An empirical analysis of the influence of expressed political orientation on election returns follows. I will first articulate the countervailing hypotheses related to what type of speech – intense, moderate or "bipartisan" – will be advantageous within a model of the outcomes of the 54 general elections between 2000 and 2006 that included an incumbent governor as a participant. The dependent variable in this first model is two-party vote share garnered by incumbent governors I will then review the additional hypotheses from the study of gubernatorial elections that act as important alternative – or complementary – explanations in this context. I conclude this section by addressing the question of whether there are different implications for the political orientation presented through speech for governors who are adopting the language of the opposite party. The dependent variable for the following section is whether or not a governor was reelected. I will articulate the position-taking hypotheses again in this second empirical analysis because the logic of their predictions can be subtly different in this context. However, I will not list the alternative hypotheses again since their logic is the same. Presiding over a poor economy, for example, should both depress the vote shares of incumbents and make it less likely that they will be reelected.

Table 14 on the following pages lists the 58 cases in this analysis. Each case is a year in a state in which an incumbent governor was eligible for reelection. There are 58

Table 14: Elections Involving Incumbent Governors, 2000-2006

Year	State	Incumbent	Party	Partisan Signal	Vote Share	Result
2000	IN	O'Bannon	D	+1	57	Won
2000	NH	Shaheen	D	+18	52.6	Won
2000	UT	Leavitt	R	-7	56.9	Won
2000	VT	Dean	D	+6	57.1	Won
2000	WA	Locke	D	+13	59.5	Won
2000	WV	Underwood	R	-12	48.1	Lost
2002	AL	Siegelman	D	+18	49.8	Lost
2002	AR	Huckabee	R	+9	53	Won
2002	CA	Davis	D	+3	48.4	Won
2002	CO	Owens	R	-10	64.9	Won
2002	CT	Rowland	R	+1	56	Won
2002	FL	Bush	R	+2	56.6	Won
2002	GA	Barnes	D	+15	47.4	Lost
2002	IA	Vilsack	D	+10	54.2	Won
2002	ID	Kempthorne	R	-6	57.1	Won
2002	NE	Johanns	R	-29	71.4	Won
2002	NV	Guinn	R	-7	75.6	Won
2002	NY	Pataki	R	+5	59.6	Won
2002	OH	Taft	R	+2	60.1	Won
2002	SC	Hodges	D	+11	47	Lost
2002	TX	Perry	R	-4	59.1	Won
2002	WI	McCallum	R	-9	47.9	Lost
2003	MS	Musgrove	D	+10	46.5	Lost
2004	DE	Minner	D	-7	52.6	Won
2004	IN	Kernan	D	-3	47.2	Lost
2004	MO	Holden	D	+5	-	Lost primary
2004	MT	Martz	R	-5	-	Did not run
2004	NC	Easley	D	+25	56.4	Won
2004	ND	Hoeven	R	+7	72.2	Won
2004	UT	Walker	R	-3	-	Lost Primary
2004	VT	Douglas	R	-4	60.7	Won

Table 14 (cont'd): Elections Involving Incumbent Governors, 2000-2006

Year	State	Incumbent	Party	Partisan Signal	Vote Share	Result
2005	WV	Wise	D	-1	-	Did not run
2006	AL	Riley	R	-2	58	Won
2006	AZ	Napolitano	D	-2	63.9	Won
2006	CA	Schwarzenegger	R	+9	58.9	Won
2006	CT	Rell	R	-8	64.1	Won
2006	GA	Perdue	R	+3	60.2	Won
2006	HI	Lingle	R	-10	63.8	Won
2006	IL	Blagojevich	D	+11	55.9	Won
2006	KS	Sebelius	D	-3	58.9	Won
2006	MD	Ehrlich	R	-15	46	Lost
2006	ME	Baldacci	D	+6	55.8	Won
2006	MI	Granholm	D	+11	57.1	Won
2006	MN	Pawlenty	R	+6	50.5	Won
2006	NE	Heineman	R	-14	73.4	Won
2006	NH	Lynch	D	0	74.1	Won
2006	NM	Richardson	D	+6	68.8	Won
2006	OK	Henry	D	-1	66.5	Won
2006	OR	Kulongoski	D	+7	54.2	Won
2006	PA	Rendell	D	-1	60.4	Won
2006	RI	Carcieri	R	-5	51	Won
2006	SC	Sanford	R	+2	55.1	Won
2006	SD	Rounds	R	-2	63.1	Won
2006	TN	Bredesen	D	+5	69.8	Won
2006	TX	Perry	R	-7	56.7	Won
2006	VT	Douglas	R	-2	57.8	Won
2006	WI	Doyle	D	+3	53.8	Won
2006	WY	Freudenthal	D	-31	70	Won

such cases between 2000 and 2006.[25] In two of these cases, the governors chose not to run for reelection (Judy Martz in Montana in 2004 and Bob Wise in West Virginia in 2005). Both of these decisions were primarily motivated by ongoing political scandals. Although important for understanding governors' political fortunes, scandal is not of a central concern in this work. In two other cases, the governors were defeated in the primary (Olene Walker in Utah in 2004 and Bob Holden in Missouri in 2004). I will discuss the potential implications of partisan speech on this outcome to the extent that their, comparatively rare, experiences suggest a pattern. The statistical analysis will focus on contrasting the remaining 54 cases, the 46 incumbent governors were successful in the general election with the eight instances governors were defeated. Though the balance of cases is heavily skewed towards incumbents who were reelected, this is not uncommon among politicians: historical rates of reelection of incumbents are as high as 95% for members of the national House of Representatives (McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal 2006).

Hypotheses

Directional Hypothesis: Incumbents' vote shares will be higher in direct proportion to the clarity of the signal in their speech associated with the majority party in the state as measured by presidential voting.

The directional theory is primarily an alternative explanation to the proximity theory for purposes of explaining victory in electoral contests. Even its proponents concede that the intense stands that are advantageous for securing victory according to the directional theory – such as ideologically extreme voting behavior or, in this case, clear partisan signals in speech

[25] This dataset does not include Craig Benson's defeat in New Hampshire in 2004 as the texts of his State of the State speeches are not available.

– are unlikely to maximize a politician's vote share in an election. MacDonald et al. (2007) explain that, in particular, advantaged politicians have an incentive to moderate their behavior in order to maximize their plurality. Strong signals, though useful for motivating one's own partisans and stimulating all those on one side of a particular political divide, run the risk of alienating opposed partisans who may support a politician for any number of non-ideological reasons such as incumbency or perceived competence due to good economic times. Incumbent governors are, by one account, advantaged politicians: 82% who participated in the general election were reelected during this time period and their average vote share was 60%. Therefore, the directional theory, in terms of the logic presented by the scholars who developed it, does not predict that there will be a connection between strong partisan signal and vote shares even if such speech is ultimately advantageous for winning, in particular, contested elections.

On the other hand, the delivery of directionally-preferred speech was correlated with higher levels of gubernatorial popularity, and popular politicians are likely to do well in elections. If, as posited in the approval chapter, speaking with a strong partisan signal represents speaking effectively in the local political vernacular, then it will attract a larger number of votes than speech that does not include words that send strong political signals. Further, although a great deal of what we know about gubernatorial elections comes from theory originally derived to explain the results of Congressional elections, there are distinct differences between governors and members of Congress. As articulated in the previous chapter, governors who present power-seeking personalities to the public receive greater public acclaim than those who emphasize affiliation with the public. Governors, as executives, have a distinctly different role than do legislators, a role for which clarity of

purpose, presented through speech, can be advantageous for their leadership profile. This and the following measures of the partisan signal in gubernatorial content are operationalized in the manner explained in the previous chapter.

> *Proximity Hypothesis: Incumbents' vote shares will be lower in direct proportion to the distance between the political position expressed through speech and the political orientation of the public as measured through presidential voting.*

The prediction that vote shares will be increased if governors match the partisan signal in speech to the political orientation of the median voter is much clearer. Avoiding partisan signals in speech is less likely to alienate moderates and may even allow opposed partisans to come into the fold and support an incumbent governor. Critically, though, this will be particularly true for advantaged governors who do not need to be overly concerned about motivating their base or winning by a razor-thin margin in a closely contested election. I will return to this distinction in the discussion of the results of this model.

> *Bipartisan Leadership Hypothesis: Incumbents' vote shares will be higher in direct proportion to the clarity of the signal in their speech associated with the language of the opposing party.*

Moderate language is not the only way to attract the support of a larger swath of the public and hence to boost vote share. Particularly if governors can rely on the support of their own partisans, as individual-level studies suggest, then bipartisan speech patterns will lead to greater vote shares. Partisans will support governors for a whole host of group identification and policy concurrence issues while opposed partisans will feel reassured by a governors who is speaking in their preferred language. Remember that "bipartisan," in this context, does not mean a pursuit of moderation *per se* but rather the adoption of behaviors –

here word choices – commonly associated with the opposing party. This is consistent with the sense in which it is often used in the description of governors such as Christine Todd Whitman who govern states by staking out positions uncommon for their parties. The prediction for the advantageous behavior of Governor Whitman – who as a Republican in New Jersey is in the political minority – is the same, though, for both the directional and bipartisan theories. Functionally, the difference between the prediction of this theory and that of the directional theory is that under the bipartisan theory of political leadership, majority party governors will explicitly choose to employ minority party language for the reasons articulated more thoroughly in the previous chapter and summarized above. Therefore, Governor Whitman would improve her chances of reelection through adopting national Democratic language but her Democratic successor Jim McGreevey would be able to rely on the natural affective connection shared with members of his own party and increase his vote margins by attracting opposed partisans through the use of Republican language. This is a counterintuitive proposition, to say the least, but one that merits analysis due to the divergent predictions for majority party governors.

Alternate Hypotheses

The following section includes alternate and control hypotheses for this analysis of the impact of the partisan signal on gubernatorial speech on election returns. I will start with a review of the hypotheses from the approval analysis. Variables from the approval analysis that are not included here include scandal, since no governor who was embroiled in a scandal during this time period participated in a general election. This set of omitted alternates also includes the approval decay hypothesis operationalized by examining the impact of term

year; there is not adequate variation in term year among governors running for reelection. Almost all governors are limited by their state constitutions to serve no more than two terms. Therefore, the vast majority of governors in this dataset are in the 4th year of their term of office. The few exceptions, including George Pataki of New York, who served four consecutive four-year terms, are rare enough that they do not provide variation on this measure.

> *National Unemployment Hypothesis: Higher levels of national unemployment will be correlated with lower vote shares and chances of reelection for incumbent governors.*
>
> *Relative Unemployment Hypothesis: Higher relative levels of unemployment within a state as compared to national unemployment will be correlated with lower vote shares and chances of reelection for incumbent governors.*

As with the analysis of the public approval of governors, governors whose tenures correspond with periods of relative economic distress, as measured by both national and relative unemployment, will have lower vote shares. Many studies of gubernatorial elections have found that economics are extremely important in determining vote shares. In this elections analysis, I will again evaluate the impact not only of the national economy but also of the state economy as measured by relative unemployment. Absolute measures of state unemployment are highly correlated with national unemployment such that examining the effects of these variables simultaneously is statistically intractable. However, the assumption that states hold their governors responsible for relative levels of unemployment assumes that citizens have some sense of how their economy is performing relative to the rest of the country. This measure of relative unemployment emerged as a highly significant predictor of gubernatorial approval. This analysis evaluates whether it is also a strong determinant of electoral success.

Coattails Hypothesis: Higher levels of presidential approval will be correlated with higher vote shares and chances of reelection for incumbent governors of the presidents' party and lower vote shares and chances of reelection for governors of the opposite party.

Southern Democrat Hypothesis: As Southern Democrats are uniquely cross-pressured in regards to partisan speech, their vote shares and chances of reelection, controlling for other factors, will be greater or less than other governors.

The influence of these factors is also gauged in the models of gubernatorial elections that follow. The logic of these hypotheses is the same as it was for the approval analysis. As was the case for the economic and political position-taking hypotheses, the coattails hypothesis, in particular, has been more thoroughly theorized and tested within the context of elections. In fact, the term "coattails" refers explicitly to an electoral dynamic. However, here, as with the analysis of approval, I expand the expectation that presidential popularity will matter to cover those years in which a president is not on the ballot. In this series, that would include elections from the years 2002, 2003, 2005 and 2006. Many states, particularly in the South, purposely schedule their gubernatorial election in odd-numbered years so that citizens evaluate their governors independent of national dynamics. This hypothesis proposes, and I will test, the proposition that these national political dynamics – specifically as represented through presidential approval – will have an impact during electoral contests in all election years. Inclusion of a categorical variable for southern Democrats in the model – in addition to accounting for the extent to which these politicians are uniquely cross-pressured in this context – also controls for the extent to which these governors are isolated from the impact of national dynamics through various state electoral institutions such as the scheduling of contests in odd-numbered years as mentioned above.

Additional Elections Hypotheses

> *Personal Approval Hypothesis: A governors' vote share and likelihood of reelection will be greater in direct proportion to their personal appeal.*

Models of gubernatorial elections generally include a direct measure of approval or an indirect measure of approval such as vote margin in the previous election. The measure that I include in the equations that follow is one of "personal approval." Technically, this measure is the residuals of the previous chapter's approval equation. It is, therefore, the part of a candidate's appeal that is not explained by the economy, presidential approval, or the political orientations they stake out through speech. Why not simply use gubernatorial approval in the model of elections? Substantively, I am interested in the extent to which the voting margin and likelihood of reelection for these incumbents is influenced by the economy, campaign spending and partisan speech. To the extent that the influence of these variables is muted by the inclusion of approval – that already incorporates the impact of these factors – I would be underestimating their influence on elections. This formulation conceptualizes vote for a governor as certifying one's approval of a governor within the voting booth rather than a choice that is influenced by a prior decision of whether a governor receives a voter's approval. However, I am substantively interested in the influence of the appeal of the candidate that is independent of political and economic factors: charisma, attractiveness and, perhaps even height and weight.[26] Gauging the impact of "personal approval" in these models allows me to do so. This measure is similar to that of "net candidate advantage" in models of presidential elections (Erikson, MacKuen and Stimson 2002).

[26] The models below do not include a candidate's gender; this variable is not statistically related to election outcomes during this time period.

Incumbent Spending Hypothesis: Incumbent spending will have no impact on gubernatorial vote share or likelihood of reelection controlling for the impact of gubernatorial popularity.

Challenger Spending Hypothesis: Spending by challengers in gubernatorial elections will have a negative impact on the vote share and likelihood of reelection for incumbents.

Using the Beyle campaign spending database (1996), I calculated per capita spending measures for both the incumbent and the challenger in each election. Greater resources translate into a greater capacity to purchase television advertising, hire professional campaign staff, support the work of campaign volunteers, and distribute campaign materials touting the relative appeal of the incumbent. Since the cost of these resources varies dramatically based on the size of a state, these numbers must be adjusted for the population of a state in order to be meaningful across cases. This is all relatively straightforward and consistent with the narratives of those who decry what they consider to be the undue influence of money in our political system. However, there is a major caveat to concern about the influence of money on elections, particularly those involving governors. Bardwell (2005) found that incumbent spending effects were a function of a candidate's popularity, resolving the conflict between those who had found such effects (e.g. Gerber 1998) and those who found no or limited effects (e.g. Abramowitz 1988). What this suggests is that unpopular incumbents cannot overcome negative public perceptions through heavy spending within their electoral contests.

Challenger Quality Hypothesis: Higher quality challengers will lead to lower vote shares and chances of reelection for gubernatorial incumbents.

The monetary resources available to challengers in a gubernatorial election are, fortunately, not the only personal factor relevant to understanding their likelihood of

defeating incumbents. Many scholars have demonstrated that there is a strong impact of "candidate quality" of challengers, conventionally measured in terms of their experience in public office. There are at least two major bases for the importance of a challenger previously having held public office. The first is that the public may prefer that their governors be experienced either at the local or state level. The experience of these politicians also translates into more fully developed political networks that are extremely useful during electoral contests as they can lead to high-profile endorsements, access to campaign donor lists and even useful strategic and tactical advice throughout a long campaign. I construct this variable in my analysis following Bardwell's (2005) modification of Squire's (1992) measure: "State officeholders and U.S House members (four), state legislators (three), local officials (two), and other political leaders (one) were scored based on established career ladders. Former officeholders were penalized a point to reflect a decline in their statewide visibility. Candidates whose celebrity translated into statewide name recognition receive a score of four" (Bardwell 2005).[27]

Table 15 presents the summary statistics for the variables that operationalize the hypotheses articulated above. A couple of observations worth noting are that there is quite a large range of relative levels of unemployment from states that were doing more than two percentage points worse than the national average to ones that were more than two percentage points better. There was also significant variation in the challenger quality measure which means in substantive terms that some incumbents faced former state officials while others were competing against political ingénues. Given the large variation in factors

[27] The one celebrity in this study was Lyn Swann, former professional football player and candidate for governor in Pennsylvania in 2006. I also assigned Martin O'Malley, the mayor of Baltimore who became governor of Maryland a score of 3 to reflect that he had a higher profile than a typical local politician.

shown to be important within past studies, does there remain a role for partisan speech in influencing electoral outcomes?

Table 15: Summary Statistics of Key Variables in Elections Analyses

Variables	Mean(SD) or Distribution	Min	Max	Range
Dependent Variables				
Two-Party Voteshare (%)	58.2 (7.70)	46	75.6	29.6
General Election Victory	8 lost, 46 won	-	-	-
Partisan Signal				
Directional	.565 (11.7)	-28.42	29.27	57.69
Proximity	8.83 (7.25)	.124	30.1	29.976
Bipartisan	-5.27 (10.5)	-28.42	29.27	57.69
Economics				
National Unemployment (%)	4.93 (.614)	4	6	2
Relative Unemployment (%)	-.354 (.991)	2.2	-2.3	-4.5
Other Political Variables				
Personal Approval, % *	2.54 (9.88)	-18.8	24.1	42.9
Presidential Approval (%, complement for opposite party)	52.3 (13.5)	29.9	70.1	40.2
Southern Democrat (categorical;1=southern Dem.)	6/54 Southern Democrats	-	-	-
Campaign Variables				
Incumbent Spending (per capita $)	1.56 (.91)	.21	5.21	5
Challenger Spending (per capita $)	1.07 (.96)	.02	4.14	4.12
Challenger Quality (Bardwell 2005, Squire 1992)	2.30 (1.50)	0	4	4

Determinants of Incumbents' Vote Share in Gubernatorial Elections

Controlling for these factors, it does appears that partisan signal has a role in explaining election outcomes. The dependent variable for the first model is incumbents' vote share. The results of this analysis are included in Table 16 on the page 148. The first three models in the table evaluate the speech hypotheses in isolation. Again, directional speech emerges as a significant predictor of incumbents' vote shares. Choosing proportionally more

words from the platform of the political party that received the state's electoral votes in the most recent presidential election has a modest but meaningful impact on vote share. A one-standard deviation change in directional speech (11.7 percentage points) increases a governor's vote shares by 2.6 percentage points. I will discuss the implications of these results more fully in the conclusion section at the end of the chapter as significant questions remain about this result including whether it holds for all governors or only for governors delivering strong signals in the language of their own party and whether this on average effect on vote share – particularly of directional speech – translates into its having a significant impact on the likelihood of incumbents' reelection.

The proximity model shows that this hypothesis, generated from what remains the bedrock theory of most political scientific analyses of electoral outcomes, not only fails to approach statistical significance but is in the wrong direction. The further that governors' speech is from the political orientation of the median voter in their states, the larger their two-party vote shares. Operationally, this result is a testament to the fact that strong, clear partisan language signals are rewarded with the largest vote margins. The question remains, however, what types of strong partisan signals are rewarded, those on the side of the political majority or those that cast the governor as an effective bipartisan leader. The third model shows that, although the bipartisan speech hypothesis has a result in the expected direction, we cannot reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, it is governors adopting the language of the majority party in the state that is associated with their receiving the highest vote shares.

Table 16: The Impact of Partisan Speeech on Incumbents' Two-Party Vote Shares, 2000-2006

	Directional	Proximity	Bipartisan	Combined
Partisan Speech				
Directional	.219 (.076) **	-	-	.166 (.085) *
Proximity	-	.126 (.135)	-	.133 (.110)
Bipartisan	-	-	.129 (.089)	.115 (.085)
Economy				
National Unem. (%)	-2.01 (1.30)	-3.25 (1.47) *	-3.33 (1.42) *	-2.56 (1.32) *
Relative Unem. (%)	-2.35 (.915) **	-1.81 (.903) *	-2.07 (.902) *	-2.27 (.880) **
Other Political Variables				
Gov Party (1=Democrat)	-.442 (.996)	-.595 (1.04)	-.646 (1.07)	-.520 (1.03)
Personal Approval †	.249 (.093) **	.189 (.099) *	.208 (.101) *	.256 (.097) **
Presidential Approval (%, inv. for opposite party)	.141 (.070) *	.161 (.071) *	.171 (.074) *	.160 (.072) *
Partisanship, Gov Party (CBS/NYT surveys)	.109 (.097)	.158 (.095)	.182 (.101) *	.168 (.110)
Southern Democrat (Categorical, 1 = S. Dem)	5.00 (3.53)	1.13 (3.81)	3.83 (3.36)	4.78 (3.75)
Election Variables				
Incumbent Spending ($, per cap)	.395 (.588)	.459 (.627)	.444 (.591)	.441 (.625)
Challenger Spending ($, per cap)	-1.84 (.778) *	-2.37 (.784) **	-1.82 (.835) *	-1.72 (.774) *
Challenger Quality (Bardwell 2005)	-7.65 (.564)	-1.17 (.610) *	-1.25 (.575) *	-.780 (.557)
Constant	61.7 (7.39) **	68.0 (8.24) **	68.9 (7.88) **	62.8 (7.50) **
N	54	54	54	54
Adj. R2	.46	.37	.38	.48

Notes: OLS, robust standard errors clustered by governor in parentheses, one-tailed tests * p<.05, **p<.01.

This result holds in the final model that evaluates all three hypotheses simultaneously. Since the value of the bipartisan speech and directional position-taking hypotheses are the same for minority-party governors, the coefficient magnitude on the test of the directional hypothesis is somewhat smaller. Nevertheless, it remains statistically significant and the coefficients and standard errors on the other two speech hypotheses are roughly comparable to those in the equations that evaluated these hypotheses in isolation.

In these analyses, all of the non-speech covariates also have the expected sign and most emerge as statistically significant. Personal approval (approval net the effects of the economy and speech) exerts a positive and significant influence showing that the personal appeal of candidates does have an impact on election outcomes during this time period. Presidential coattails appear to matter as well with governors' electoral success rising and falling with the popularity of the sitting president. This may be an impact of this particular era during which President Bush's public evaluations plummeted dramatically depressing the vote shares of Republican governors and boosting those of their Democratic counterparts. The normal vote is, as it has been within other studies of elections, is a weak and inconsistent predictor of electoral results. Consistent with Bardwell (2005) the effect of incumbent spending disappears with the inclusion of gubernatorial approval although the influence of challenger spending remains robust. Money also matters in politics: a one standard deviation change in challenger spending decreases incumbent vote share by 2 percent. Challenger quality is also a statistically significant predictor of incumbents' vote share: the more experienced their challengers are in state politics, the lower incumbents' vote shares will be. Governors are right to be concerned about the emergence of a competitor who has, for example, served as Secretary of State. They are justified in breathing easier if

their challenger is, for example, a business leader with no political experience. The ability of such candidates to finance their own elections, however, may make them more formidable opponents due to the campaign spending dynamic identified above.

Partisan Signal and Cognitive Dissonance

It appears that, on average, incumbent governors who use proportionally more words from the platform of the party that received a state's electoral votes in the most recent presidential election will receive greater vote shares. This finding is unsurprising in the case of governors delivering stronger signals using the language of their own party. However, there is a caveat related to this conclusion as it applies to governors adopting the language of the opposing political party: their ability to engage in such behavior to their electoral advantage is inconsistent with experimental studies about political position-taking, party identification and cognitive dissonance. The following section reviews this literature and then examines the results of my analysis more closely to address this concern.

Building on extensive work within the discipline of psychology (see Fiske and Taylor 1984), many political scientists have examined the use of heuristics in information processing by voters. "Heuristics" are merely cognitive shortcuts that people, as "cognitive misers" (see Peffley et al. 1987), use to simply their decision-making processes in a complicated world. So, for example, consumers may purchase furniture at the same store as do their friends without spending the time to amass the information needed to decide whether that store has the best prices, the widest selection, or the style of couches they prefer. Some of the most powerful heuristics within political reasoning also rely on group identity. Perhaps the most influential of these is party identification. The political world is extremely

complex and most citizens have little information (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996) with which to make rationally comprehensive decisions about which candidate to select in an election or on whether to approve of their sitting governor. Therefore, many people simply choose or support the politician who shares their party identification.

The American Voter (Campbell et al. 1960) was one of the first major works of political science to emphasize the importance of partisanship that it conceptualized as a lifelong attachment. Scholarship has added many nuances to this conception (e.g., Fiorina 1981) but has consistently demonstrated the central role that partisanship has in shaping the political opinions and structuring the voting behaviors of American citizens. The power of partisanship influences more than our evaluations of politicians who adopt and generally embrace these party labels. A desire to remain consistent with the party line can lead voters to change their minds on such central issues as civil rights and abortion (Stimson and Carmines 1979). It can even warp voters' perceptions of the economy with strong partisans believing that the economy is doing better than objective measures would indicate during the tenure of a president who shares their party identification (Parker-Stephen 2007).

It is not merely those with little education or inclination to learn about the political world who take these mental shortcuts. Phillip Converse (1964) described five different "levels of conceptualization" among members of the American public, the highest of which was reserved for those who employ "a relatively abstract and far reaching conceptual dimension as a yardstick against which political objects and their shifting political significance over time [are] evaluated." (1964, 216) These "ideologues" tend to be more intelligent and better educated. We know now, though, that these qualities do not necessarily make these well-informed people more responsive to novel information about the political

world. In fact, the "highly-constrained" nature of their belief systems may make them quite resistant to new information and even less likely to change their support for a particular party and hence the politicians who represent that party.

Whether voters have limited or extensive knowledge about politics, they are more likely to act in a more "theory-driven" than "data-driven" manner, to adopt the terms used by Wendy Rahn (1993), if they have party labels available to them to help structure their choices. Data-driven voters represent the ideal of rational citizens who consider all of the available information at each decision point. Such analysis of data, though, can be quite complicated whereas the application of theory is appealingly simple. Theory-driven voters rely on their preconception that, regardless of the situation their nation or state is facing, the party with which they identify is the most likely to find the correct solution to it. Some scholarship has suggested that partisanship exercises more than simple influence on reasoning which causes voters merely to discount the claims of politicians from the opposing party. The real power of such mental shortcuts springs from the reason that people employ them in the first place. Voters use heuristics such as partisanship to simplify the political world. This is due to their desire to avoid, in general, complicated tasks of mental reasoning and to avoid, in particular, the specific type of complexity that engenders cognitive dissonance (Festinger 1957).

Cognitive dissonance occurs when something that someone knows to be true is in conflict with something else that someone holds as true. For example, people who have strongly identified as Republicans throughout their entire lives will experience cognitive dissonance if confronted with evidence that a Republican president has drastically mismanaged the economy. In this circumstance, voters have three options: 1) to hold in their

minds the contradictory ideas that Republicans are the best managers of the economy although the economy has performed poorly under a Republican president, 2) to ignore evidence that the economy is doing poorly or 3) to abandon their lifelong commitment to the Republican Party. Most strong partisans choose to ignore evidence that their preconceptions are incorrect (Parker-Stephen 2007; McAvoy 2008). It is much easier to simply counterargue (Taber and Lodge 2000) against the proposition that the economy is doing poorly than it is to incorporate information that is inconsistent with one's strong and lifelong positive affective attachment to a particular political party. The same dynamics is at work when voters are confronted with a situation in which their party takes a stance on an issue that is counter to their own opinion. As mentioned above, most voters will change their position to come into alignment with the position of their party platform (Carmines and Stimons 1979). It is only voters for whom the issue is extremely salient who will switch parties (Carsey and Layman 2006).

The results of the analyses of public approval and elections above suggest that governors must employ partisan language that is atypical for their parties in order to be successful in a state in which they are in the minority party. However, these atypical positions increase the complexity of the choices available, and it is precisely this type of complicated reasoning that most voters aim to avoid. Building on these observations about political psychology and communication, Rahn (1993) presents clear experimental evidence that when faced with information about politicians taking stances that are unusual for their parties, voters are actually *more* rather than less likely to rely on their partisan heuristics for deciding between competing candidates. Should liberal, Democratic voters support a candidate who is a pro-environment Republican or one that is a pro-life Democrat? Faced

with the sort of a complex decision, Rahn's research suggests that many of these voters are actually more likely to fall back on their preconceptions and simply support the Democrat.

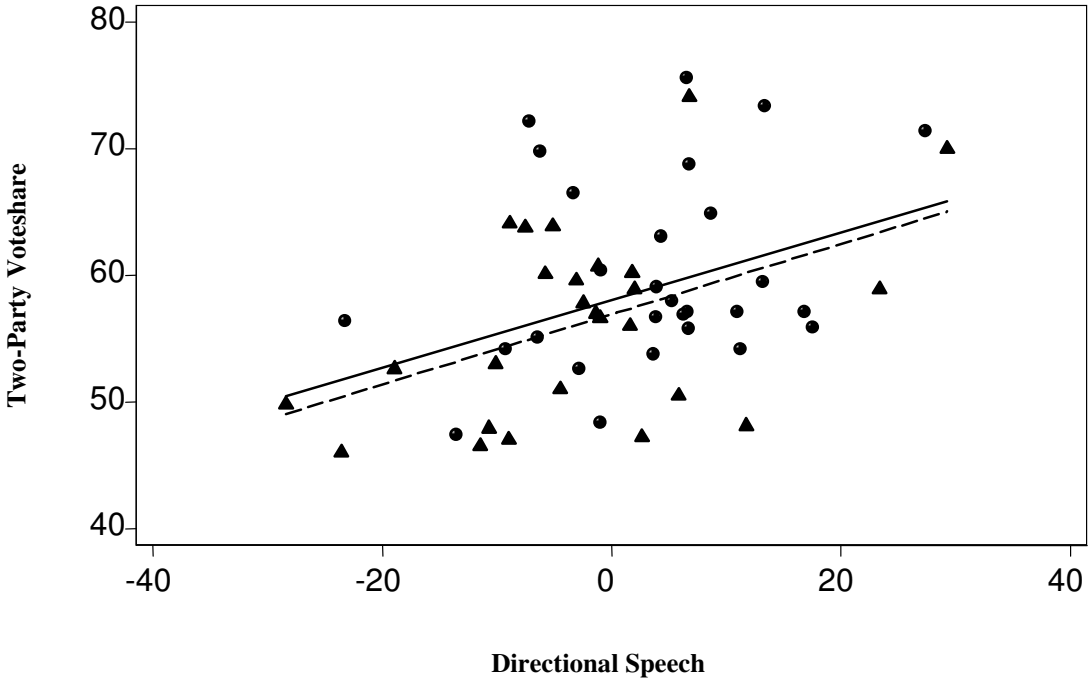
Governors within the minority party in a particular state appear, therefore, to be in something of a bind. They can either present substantive policies and employ language that is consistent with their party and therefore likely fail to appeal to the majority of voters in their state. Or they can take atypical policy stances and use atypical symbolic language which will increase the complexity of the choice that voters face and activate the heuristic reasoning of these voters which will in turn deliver the victory to their majority party opponent.

However, this assumes that these experimental findings about the micro-level information processing mechanisms of voters generalize to the level of the electorate, a conclusion that runs counter to the findings of scholars who have found that although citizens as individuals may appear uninformed and irrational, the electorate as a whole appears to react in a rational and systematic manner (Page and Shapiro 1983; Wlezien 1995; Erikson, MacKuen and Stimson 2002). The conclusions of the analyses above appear consistent with the findings of those who claim that partisanship is an extremely important way in which American political life is structured but that politicians can effectively position themselves along this dimension in order to appeal to the public and can do so independent of their own partisan identification.

Given the theoretical and experimental support for the claim that politicians will not be able to successfully adopt the language of the opposite party because of the extent to which this causes cognitive dissonance that will lead voters to ignore the content of their messages, I will directly evaluate its predictions. If Rahn is correct, then only "in-party"

governors should be able to increase their vote shares and maximize their chances of reelection by delivering speeches with strong majority party signals. By "in-party" here, I mean governors from the party that received a state's electoral votes in the most recent presidential election. However, the results displayed in Figure 8 on the following page dispel the notion that the findings of these experimental studies abstract to the level of the electorate in these cases during this time period.

Figure 8: Directional Speech and Incumbent Vote Shares by Majority Party Status



In this figure, the triangles represent governors from the party that did not receive a state's votes in the most recent presidential election. This means that to deliver "directionally-preferred" speech, they had to adopt the language of the opposite party. The circles represent governors from the "in-party." The solid line represents the relationship for

the entire set of governors; the dotted line the relationships only for "out-party" governors. The difference between these simple slopes is subtle and not statistically discernable. Therefore, I cannot conclude that "out-party" governors benefit *more* from directional speech. What this figure displays – perhaps more clearly than a null finding in a fully specified regression equation – is that they do not benefit less, from such speech. Hence they seem to overcome whatever cognitive dissonance comes from this type of atypical position-taking behavior either because voters behave differently in the ballot box than they do in experimental settings or through the "miracle of aggregation" (Erikson, MacKuen and Stimson 2002) through which the behavior of rational voters cancels out the irrational. This also provides again limited confirmation of the theoretical expectations[28] of the scholars who advance the directional theory, specifically that it may be more highly correlated with vote shares among incumbents who are not advantaged; whether a governor is a member of the party that received a state's votes for president is one way of measuring whether or not they have an advantage within the context of an election. Overall, though, this analysis provides an important piece in understanding why control of the governorship switches between parties: it appears that governors can deliver partisan signals from either party, regardless of their own party affiliation and that doing so will be successful if that signal is consistent with the "direction" of a state as measured by its recent presidential voting history.

[28] In this section, and elsewhere, I refer to the predictions of the standard, or simple, conception of the theoretical predictions of the directional model that voters will prefer candidates on their side of an issue in direct proportion to the extent to which these candidates present clear stances on their side of an issue. These authors (MacDonald et al. 2007) also present a more full account of the implications of their model in which districts at the middle of the ideological spectrum will be less stimulated by these appeals and hence more likely to respond to ideological factors …

Partisan Speech and Likelihood of Incumbent Reelection

A significant vote share can be useful for creating the public perception of an electoral mandate, but the first goal of every candidate is winning the election. The next empirical examination, therefore, is of the factors that influence the likelihood of reelection for gubernatorial incumbents. It will include a subset, for methodological reasons explained below, of the alternative hypotheses. It will also test the three central hypotheses about position-taking of candidates through the partisan signal in their speech. Again, the central question is whether governors benefit from speech 1) that delivers strong signals on the side of the political majority, 2) that is tailored to approximate the political orientation of the median voter in a state, or 3) that adopts the language of the opposite party in order to present a "bipartisan" orientation.

> *Directional Hypothesis: Incumbents' likelihood of reelection will be higher in direct proportion to the clarity of the signal in their speech associated with the majority party in the state as measured by presidential voting.*

The discussion in Chapter Two more thoroughly explained the directional theory of voting and why delivering strong signals on the side of the political majority will lead to reelection for politicians. As mentioned in the last section, the theory was not developed to explain candidates' vote shares and, in fact, there were reasons to believe that strong signals will decrease vote shares through potentially alienating moderate voters and opposed partisans. Nevertheless, as was the case for public approval ratings, it appears that – at least for governors and using this specific Wordscores measure as our proxy for political orientation – directional speech is correlated with higher vote shares, a relationship that persists, and that is somewhat but not significantly stronger, among governors of parties that

did not receive a state's electoral votes in the most recent presidential election. This result was somewhat surprising, although it is consistent with the extent to which this measure is a natural test of the directional theory as it is an account of symbolic speech patterns. Further executives may uniquely benefit from expressing strong rather than moderate signals in speech given their roles as leaders of their polity. The expectation that directional speech will lead to incumbent reelection is much stronger for all of the reasons articulated in Chapter Two that summarize the work done by the scholars who advance the directional theory of political evaluations. Therefore, our expectation in this case is again that the stronger the partisan signal on the side of the political majority, the more likely that an incumbent will win reelection. The assumption remains that, as was the case for vote share, the ability of governors to use partisan speech to adopt advantageous political orientations is independent of their own party identification.

> *Proximity Hypothesis: Incumbents' likelihood of reelection will be lower in direct proportion to the distance between the political position expressed through speech and the political orientation of the public as measured through presidential voting.*

The expectation that speech that closely approximates the political orientation of the median voter is equally strong and was also explained more thoroughly in Chapter Two. Proximity theory of political evaluations remains the predominant method for calculating the likelihood of a politician's victory in a contested election. As with directional theory, this analysis relaxes the assumption that there many different dimensions of speech along which voters evaluate politicians to focus exclusively on the partisan signal within the speech of these politicians. A somewhat subtle but yet perhaps crucial distinction between these analyses and traditional proximity analyses is that the middle of the scale according to this

measure is not necessarily a clear moderate signal as such but rather a lack of a strong partisan signal in speech. Again, the distance is measured by the residuals of the equation predicting partisan speech from the percentage in a state that supported the Democratic candidate for president. The larger these residuals, the more "out-of-line," in terms of their speech patterns are, and the less likely they will be to be reelected. In substantive terms, the hypothesis posits that a winning plurality of voters in states such as Utah, Idaho and Wyoming prefers a strong Republican signal within speech, that voters in Massachusetts, California and New York prefer a strong Democratic signal, and that voters in Missouri, Iowa and New Mexico prefer that politicians avoid language that closely identifies them with either political party.

> *Bipartisan Leadership Hypothesis: Incumbents' likelihood of reelection will be higher in direct proportion to the clarity of the signal in their speech associated with the language of the opposing party.*

The hypothesis that the public will prefer, in the aggregate, politicians who adopt the language of the opposite party has at least two individual-level explanations. First, bipartisan speech will predict electoral success if voters recognize that governors are using the language of the opposite party and prefer this behavior in and of itself. Second, if bipartisan language is associated with a bipartisan leadership style that is more effective at building political coalitions and advancing policy goals and the public recognizes and rewards this effect then this is another mechanism through which bipartisan speech will translate into electoral success. In the context of elections, the adoption of bipartisan speech can be useful for both "in-party" and "out-party" executives. Governors from the party that received a state's votes for president can rely on this natural advantage, if it exists, and governors from the "out-

party" in a state can be successful through adopting "in-party" language. This is distinct from the directional theory that predicts that the same partisan signal in language will be the same for all incumbent governors. However, in the case of "out-party" governors, the measure of partisan signal in speech is the same under the directional framework as it is under the bipartisan framework, a point that will emerge as important when I evaluate the predictive power of these competing hypotheses. The measure of bipartisan signal in speech is, therefore, the unadjusted measure of partisan signal for Republicans governors (as larger values represent a stronger Democratic signal in speech) and the negative value of this measure for Democratic governors (such that higher values indicate a stronger Republican signal in speech).

Methods: Small Sample Maximum Likelihood

Evaluating the determinants of victory presents important methodological challenges. Since the dependent variable is dichotomous – whether an incumbent won or lost an election – a maximum likelihood technique is appropriate. I will use a standard logit regression, but small sample estimates using this and other maximum likelihood methods can be highly biased. Further, there are only 8 cases out of a total of 54 in which incumbent governors were defeated during this time period.[29] Therefore, the statistical power of these tests is limited.

[29] To check for bias given the unbalanced nature of the dependent variable, I also ran a complementary log-log regression equation. The results produced using this method were substantively identical – in terms of magnitude of effect and statistical significance – to those generated using a standard logit equation. I report the results of the logit regression here because complementary log-log regression does not report odds ratios which greatly eases substantive interpretability.

Hart and Clark (1999) conclude that the risk of generating "Type I errors" (false positives) does not increase as sample size shrinks but that the risk of "Type II errors" (false negatives) increases dramatically. They recommend that researchers have at least 30 to 50 cases for each independent variable. Even if this is an overly conservative estimate, there is reason to be concerned about whether a sample of 54 elections will produce valid results given the necessity of including an adequate number of variables such that I can be confident that the results of my model are not spurious due to omitted variable bias. However, this caveat suggests increased confidence in any statistical results due to the proclivity of these techniques to produce false negatives. To reduce the number of regressors to a reasonable subset given the lack of statistical power in the models that follow, I include only those alternate hypotheses that emerged as strong and significant predictors of incumbent vote share: relative unemployment,[30] personal approval, presidential approval, challenger spending per capita and challenger quality. Each of these is evaluated alongside one of the three speech-related hypotheses in three separate models.

Determinants of Likelihood of Incumbent Reelection

Table 17 on the following page presents three models evaluating the strength of alternative explanations for the likelihood of incumbents' reelection in gubernatorial elections. Again, the standard political science explanation for electoral victory – the proximity hypothesis – is not correlated with the dependent variable. However, in this case,

[30] National unemployment also emerged as a significant predictor of incumbent vote share, though not of their public approval ratings. I omit it here for purposes of parsimony but, as is the case for relative unemployment, it does not approach statistical significance as a predictor of incumbent reelection.

it is at least in the expected direction (greater rhetorical distance from the median voter leads to a lower chance of reelection) and approaches conventional bounds of statistical significance. (Please note that the coefficients in the table are odds ratios and therefore that values less than one indicate that the variable is associated with a lower chance of reelection.) Also in concert with the results of the analyses of public approval ratings and incumbent vote shares, directional speech is a significant predictor of victory controlling for other hypotheses.

However, as it displayed in Model 3, the bipartisan position-taking hypothesis also predicts victory controlling for other variables.[31] The reason for this is that there is only one majority party governor who lost reelection during this time period and therefore only one case for which the values of the variables that operationalize the directional and bipartisan hypotheses are different, that of Cecil Underwood of West Virginia. Further, his is a special case because although West Virginia has supported the Republican presidential candidate (George W. Bush) in the last two elections (2000 and 2004), it has a large Democratic candidate (Bill Clinton) in the previous two elections (1992 and 1996). I will, in fact, return to a discussion of West Virginia in the conclusion to this work. Regardless of the nature of the case, though, it alone does not represent an adequate amount of variation on which to base the definitive rejection of one hypothesis (bipartisan leadership) in favor of another majority in terms of partisan identification (over 60 percent) and supported the Democratic

[31] Including both in the same model while controlling for other variables leads to neither emerging as significant, although given the small sample size, this may be a false negative. Including only directional speech and bipartisan speech in an equation predicting victory leads to only directional speech emerging as significant. My confidence is somewhat limited, though, that this is definitive evidence that a directional rather than bipartisan mechanism at work

Table 17: The Impact of Partisan Speech on Incumbents' Likelihood of Winning Reelection, 2000-2006

	Model 1 Directional	Model 2 Proximity	Model 3 Bipartisan
Partisan Speech			
Directional	1.11 * (.060)	-	-
Proximity	-	.91 (.063)	-
Bipartisan	-	-	1.16 * (.089)
Economy			
Relative Unemployment (%)	1.40 (.811)	.81 (.431)	.87 (.482)
Other Political Variables			
Personal Approval (residuals of equation predicting approval)	1.07 (.073)	1.03 (.060)	1.09 (.089)
Presidential Approval (%, complement for opp. party)	1.06 (.050)	1.06 (.047)	1.10 * (.062)
Election Variables			
Challenger Spending ($, per cap)	.21 * (.157)	.23 * (.160)	.19 * (.163)
Challenger Quality	.44 (.243)	.44 * (.216)	.31 * (.202)
N	54	54	54
Pseudo R2	.49	.43	.50

Notes: Odds ratios of logit regression, standard errors in parentheses, one-tailed tests * p<.05, **p<.01, *** p<.001

(directional position-taking). Overall, the dynamic that is driving these results is that of minority-party governors either losing reelection because they failed to adopt majority language[32] (such as McCallum in Wisconsin, Ehrlich in Maryland or Siegelman in Alabama) or winning because they did (such as Schwarzenegger in California and Freudenthal in Wyoming). This pattern is consistent with both the directional hypothesis that incumbents will increase their chances of reelection through delivering strong signals consistent with the majority and with the bipartisan hypothesis that incumbents will improve their electoral prospects through word choices that are consistent with the language of the opposite party. Though these results are inconclusive as it pertains to adjudication between the directional and bipartisan theories, however, they are, again, a rejection of the dominant alternative within most analyses of political science: proximity theory. This null finding is, perhaps, the most important aspect of these results. The conclusions of this analysis of what drives the likelihood of reelection for incumbents, therefore, are somewhat more qualified than they were for the results of the studies of the determinants of public approval and incumbent vote shares.

One final aspect of the findings that increases the plausibility of the results but also raises an interesting set of questions is that all of the rest of the explanatory variables except for one are in the expected direction. The magnitudes and standard errors associated with these effects are highly stable and most approach or surpass conventional bounds of statistical significance. The strongest and most consistent finding across specifications including different measures of speech is that challenger spending matters a great deal for

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[32] As a reminder, this status is based on presidential voting rather than on state partisanship.

whether incumbents are reelected. As Bardwell (2005) has shown and as my result replicate, unpopular incumbents cannot overcome their shortcomings solely by spending more money in their reelection effort, but both unpopular and popular incumbents find their chances of reelection lessened if the monetary resources of their challengers are greater.

The most curious result of these models is that neither national unemployment nor relative state unemployment has a significant impact on the likelihood of the reelection of gubernatorial incumbents during this time. Economic factors had strong and significant impacts on approval ratings and vote shares but here they do not approach statistical significance, and relative unemployment even has the incorrect sign in the equation that includes the directional measure of speech. An analysis of the connection between economics and elections is not the central concern of this study. Therefore, I will not attempt to unpack further, within the context of this work, whether economics truly has no impact on incumbent reelection during this period, whether it does have an impact but I have the incorrect measure for the relevant economic factors, or whether national unemployment exercises an indirect influence through, for example, presidential popularity.

This crucial distinction in terms of the predictive power of economics in these two sets of equations is a reminder that the determinants of incumbent vote shares are not necessarily the same as the factors that influence their likelihood of reelection. This is an important caveat about generalizing from studies of gubernatorial elections that have vote shares as their dependent variable. The choice of vote shares as a phenomenon of interest is understandable given the statistical issues that I have detailed and attempted to compensate for here. Further, understanding the size of the electoral mandate for governors, as measured through their vote shares or margins of victory, is important as is being able to specify the

determinants of individual voter's choices of candidate. However, neither of these is a direct account of the factors that influence which candidate actually won the election. What this suggests is that we may still understand comparably little about the determinants of victory in gubernatorial elections and therefore that this area of research is as fertile for future study as are most analyses that focus on state and local politics and public policy.

Democracy in Action?

Perhaps the most important finding from this analysis is not that partisan speech is a crucial factor in all gubernatorial elections for the magnitude of this marginal effect is somewhat small. It may be, rather, the finding that politicians can effectively adopt the language of the opposite party in order to improve their electoral fortunes. It was, in fact, the apparent ability of governors to benefit from word choices of the opposing party that lead to my inability to definitively adjudicate between the directional and bipartisan hypotheses in the context of an analysis of incumbents' reelection prospects. This is a conclusion that is relevant beyond the study of governors specifically. It is again evidence that, although on the individual level voters may appear irrational and biased, in the aggregate the public appears quite rational. On the normative level of democratic theory, therefore, these results are reassuring. They suggest that the public is attuned to the information contained in the speeches of politicians and does not merely tune out language that is unexpected. Republican governors, such as George Pataki, can appeal to the New York State Public that has a consistently Democratic political orientation by adopting the language of the national Democratic Party. If only Democratic politicians could appeal to this public through language there would be little meaningful competition between the parties. V.O. Key (1949)

documented in a compelling manner the pathologies of one-party government in the American south.

The true nature of this competition, however, remains unclear. Is it a competition between competing substantive policy positions or merely a rhetorical competition that turns on the effective delivery of partisan signals in speech? Do American state publics choose to vote for incumbent governors based on the substantive content of their policy agendas or based on the political orientations that they present to the public through their partisan speech? To demonstrate that voters are "data-driven," in some sense, is not to prove that the data on which they rely comprehends the picayune details of successful governance through sensible policy choices. They may still be "theory driven" in that they assume that politicians who are adopting their preferred language are also pursuing their preferred policies. About this they may be very wrong, a crucial caveat to the conclusion that these results represent democracy in action in which the public is sensibly evaluating the political actions of governors. It is to this connection between speech and policy behavior that I turn in the final empirical chapter of this work.

Chapter 7: Partisan Speech and State Fiscal Policy

This work began with an account of the political fortunes of Dave Freudenthal, the Democratic governor who – perhaps contrary to expectations – was reelected by a large margin in the State of Wyoming in 2006. One of the puzzles at the heart of this work is why governors like Freudenthal who are in parties that represent distinct minorities in their states are able to be successful, sometimes very successful over long periods of time. The explanation that I have advanced up until this point has turned on political speech. Governors – whether they are members of the minority or majority and regardless of their own partisan identification – appear to be able to appeal to the political majority in their state through the "partisan signal" contained in the word choices in their States of the State.

The case of Dave Freudenthal is representative of these findings: in spite of his own Democratic partisan identification, he employed vastly more politically-charged "Republican words" in his speech, and hence experienced high approval ratings, boosted his vote share and increased the likelihood that he would be reelected. The dynamic through which he was able to effectively appeal to the public of Wyoming appears "directional" (Rabinowitz and MacDonald 1989): he delivered a strong, clear signal using the language of the Republican Party, the political majority in his state. My measure of partisan signal in speech compares the words that Freudenthal employed in his State of the State speeches to those in national Democratic and Republican party platforms. Since he used proportionally more words from the Republican platform, he portrayed himself, at least through his choice of language, as

more in-step with the values and priorities of Wyoming than would a governor who used words primarily from the Democratic platform.

Word usage, however, does not necessarily bind a politician to specific actions, and any thorough account of the connection between political orientations and electoral outcomes must incorporate an account of the influence of actual governing behaviors. In this regard, there are at least two distinct possibilities: Freudenthal may have sounded like a Republican because he was accurately describing a policy orientation that was more akin to that of the national Republican Party than to his own Democratic Party. This was the opinion of editorial writer Bill Sniffin of the North Wyoming Daily News of Worland, Wyoming who wrote around the time of Freudenthal's reelection in 2006:

> "As a cautious and fiscally conservative Democrat, the governor spent his first term working closely with the Republican legislators to get some remarkable feats accomplished." (Sniffin 2006)

Did this editorialist present an accurate picture of the true nature of Freudenthal's policy actions when in office? Richard Wall, an editorial writer for the Cheyenne Tribune-Eagle had a significantly different take:

> "Although Mr. Freudenthal play[s] down party labels, [he is] partisan to the core. While Mr. Freudenthal proclaims a 'bipartisan' approach to solving Wyoming problems, he endorses Democrats at election time. The liberal John Kerry comes to mind from 2004 … Can voters think of a single Republican endorsed by the supposedly 'bipartisan' Mr. Freudenthal in this year's election?" (Wall 2006)

There is a possibility, of course, that both writers might both be correct. Sniffin is referring to fiscal policies, claiming that at least as pertains to government spending, Governor Freudenthal is an atypical representative of his party in that he values fiscal restraint. Wall, however, is referring specifically to Freudenthal's political endorsements, objecting to the fact that for a politician who portrays himself as bipartisan, he never actually

endorses members of the opposite party. These behaviors are reconcilable. Party loyalty – and the endorsements that follow – may be common even for those politicians who, for reasons of governance, conscience, or electoral advantage, adopt language or positions that are contrary to those of their own parties.

On the other hand, Wall could be right that Freudenthal is not meaningfully committed to the priorities of the Republican Party beyond the lip service that he gives to its agenda in his public pronouncements. If the actual policies pursued by Governor Freudenthal are not as influential in affecting his public fortunes as is the manner in which he presents himself to the public, then Wall's frustration may be quite justified. Is it the presentation rather than the substance of Freudenthal's agenda that influences public evaluations? Is the wool being pulled over the eyes of the citizens of the State of Wyoming? If so, are they uniquely gullible or is there a nationwide pattern of state publics paying attention primarily to what governors say rather than to what they do?

The implications for representation of the answer to this question are quite far-reaching and relevant beyond the study of state politics. The president during this time period was George W. Bush. Though this work is not about presidential politics, it is worth noting that Wall's criticism of Freudenthal was mirrored by the criticisms of many conservatives of President Bush. These detractors claimed that Bush's successful portrayal of himself as a staunch conservative Republican led to his being able to preside with impunity over massive expansions of the federal government's scope, responsibility and financial commitments.

A further implication, if words have an effect that is either independent of or supersedes that of actions, is that politicians may also be able to "have it both ways." If the

statewide electorate pays attention primarily to the speech of governors rather than to their actions, governors may be able to accrue the benefits of spending in areas that will attract the votes – and the monetary contributions – of narrow interests while nevertheless retaining the support of a broader public that believes the governor is acting in a fiscally conservative manner. However advantageous such a pattern may be for politicians, it is likely to be quite disadvantageous for the public; if, at both the federal and state levels, the strategic use of partisan language can cut the cord of accountability between representative and represented, this may lead to policy outcomes desired only by a small set of clientele groups leaving the larger public with a set of fiscal policies that are potentially incoherent and, at least, inconsistent with the public believes it is supporting.

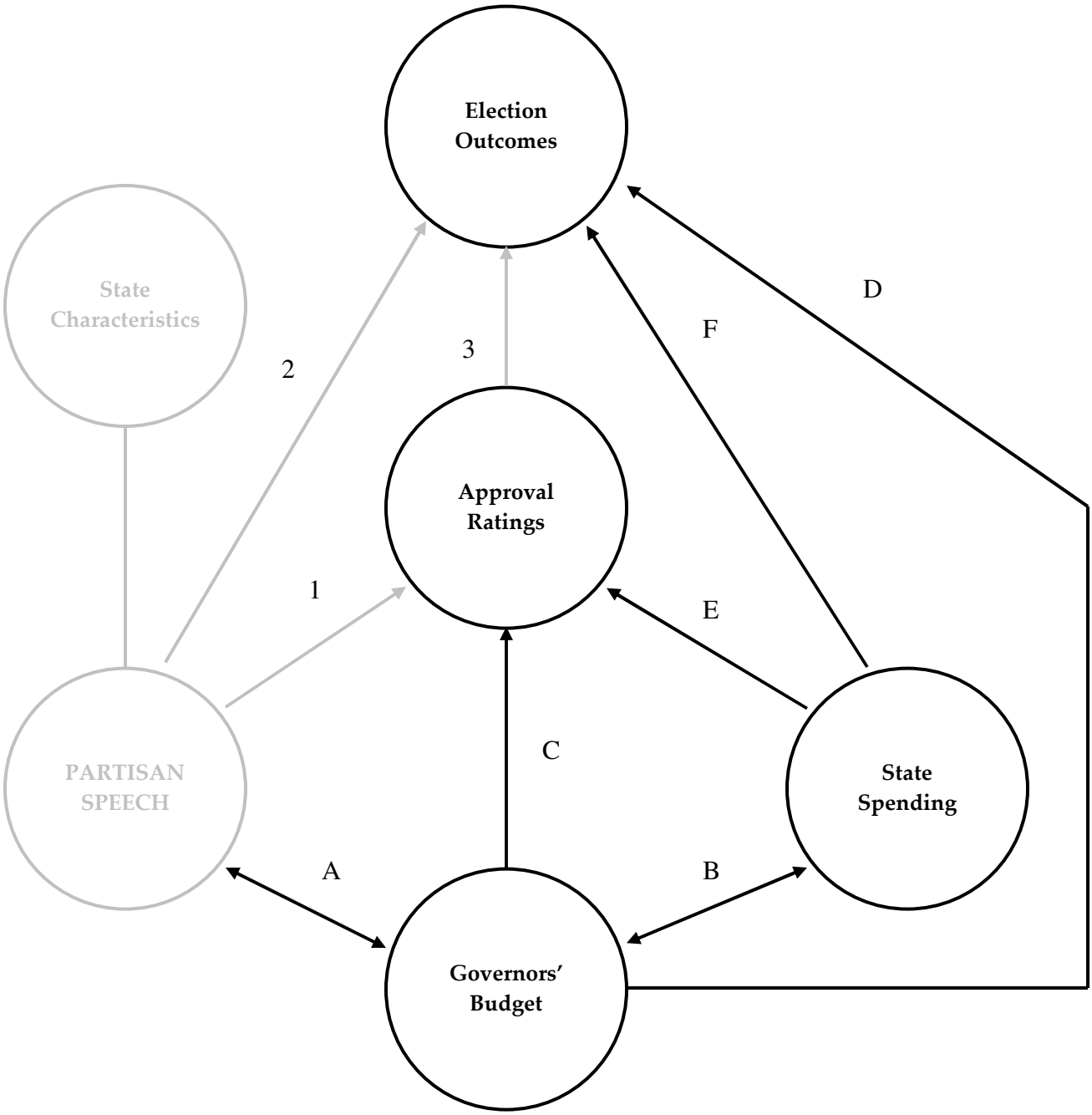
It is fiscal policy – specifically the choice of how much to expand or contract the amount of money that the states devote to their "general funds," (described in greater detail below) – that will be the focus of this analysis of state executives' governing behaviors. Do those governors who increase government spending also deliver strong signals associated with the Democratic Party that has historically been committed to the expansion of government programs (Beasley and Case 1995; Stimson 1999)? Conversely, do governors who decrease, in relative terms, government spending also present themselves as Republicans, a party that generally portrays itself as fiscally conservative? This relationship is represented by the arrow marked "A" in Figure 9 below. Further, is it for their words or their actions that governors are held accountable? As was the case for the preceding chapters, the dependent variables for these analyses are yearly public approval ratings for all governors and two-party vote shares for incumbent governors. The results that follow control for the factors articulated in the previous chapters, in particular for the influence of

the partisan signal in speech on approval ("1") and vote shares ("2") as well as for the effect of public approval on vote shares ("3").

The two sets of hypotheses I test that gauge the impact of fiscal policy on public evaluations are based on two different stages in the policy process: governors' spending recommendations and actual spending outcomes in the states. The primary focus on this chapter's inquiry, therefore, will be on the connection between governor's recommendations and public approval ("C") and vote shares ("D") and between actual spending outcomes and these two variables (arrows "E" and "F"). One important question that I will address within the context of this work, though, is the relationship between these variables (arrow "B"). Do governor's proposals influence policy?

The outline of the rest of the chapter is as follows: I will first discuss the choice of state spending as my measure of policy within the context of a summary review of the literature on state politics and public policy and explain why I employ it rather than an index of policy liberalism to gauge substantive policy behaviors. I will then describe in detail the fiscal policy data examining the relationship between governors' recommendations and actual policy outcomes. Subsequently, I will articulate hypotheses that I operationalize using these state spending data, testable propositions based on the theories articulated in previous chapters as well as other theories specific to the study of state policy. Finally, I will evaluate the predictive power of each of these hypotheses for explaining first governors' public approval ratings and then incumbents' vote shares paying particular attention to the relationship, if any, between partisan speech and fiscal policy.

Figure 9: Partisan Speech, Fiscal Policy, Public Approval Ratings and Incumbent Vote Share among American State Governors, 2000-2006



The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the implication of these results. Do governors who are members of distinct partisan minorities increase their success through the effective utilization of charged political language or were previous chapters' results mere artifacts of the exclusion of the substantive policy behaviors of these governors? Must speech be consistent with action in order to be politically efficacious?

Data: Studying and Measuring State Policy

Since the primary original contribution of this project is centrally about the impact of symbolic language on public outcomes, I will rely even more heavily in this chapter on the work of others who have examined in detail the electoral consequences of state policy. The vast majority of this research, however, focuses on the extent to which the causal arrow points in the other direction and, therefore, examines how policy liberalism or fiscal policy outcomes are the result of electoral contests (Wright, Erikson and McIver 1987; Erikson, Wright and McIver 1989), divided government and, generally, competition among parties (Alt and Lowry 2000, 2003; but see McAtee, Yackee and Lowery 2003), characteristics of interest group communities (Gray et al. 2004), the balance of participation of business and education groups rather than labor unions and political parties in the political process (Gray and Lowery 1991), the diffusion of innovations among the states (Wright 1969; Gray 1973; Berry and Berry 1990), competition among states (Hwang and Gray 1991) and many other factors.

Many of these studies (e.g., Wright, Erikson and McIver 1987; Gray et al. 2004) examine the influence of political variables on an index of state policy that is created by aggregating information on policy differences among the states in such diffuse areas as gun

control laws and generosity of welfare benefits. In some ways, this is the most direct measure of substantive policy behavior among the states. Measuring change on this index of policy liberalism, though, may not be ideal for coming to an understanding of the determinants of governors' varying approval ratings and vote margins. This would necessitate, first and foremost, that meaningful change on these policy measures occurs during governors' terms: the office of the governor switches between parties frequently, a constant cannot explain this change. McIver, Erikson and Wright (2001) conducted a careful analysis of state policy over a twenty-five year period and concluded that, at least as it relates to the index of public policy liberalism, there had been little absolute change and no relative change among the states during that time. Fluctuations in overall levels of policy liberalism, they concluded, were driven primarily by national changes such as welfare reform in 1996. To the extent that changes in the index of policy liberalism influence state elections, therefore, this measures the impact of national political trends. I incorporate the influence of national trends, at least partially, through the inclusion of presidential approval in the models that follow. However, to study the impact of changes of state policy on state politics, particularly within the context of models in which the unit of analysis is a year, requires a measure that varies from year to year and for which there is meaningful within-state variation.

Table 18 on the following page displays summary statistics of the liberalism index as well as several other key policy variables in the American states during this time period including those pertaining to fiscal policy. Policy liberalism, here, is an updated index compiled by Gray et al. (2004, 2007) that is based on Erikson, Wright and McIver's initial measure (1987). The state ideology and partisanship measures are those drawn from

CBS/NYT survey data that were described in greater detail in Chapter 4. In both of these cases, zero represents balance between Democrats and Republicans, conservatives and liberals. All of the information on spending is drawn from the semi-annual reports of the National State Budget Officers' Association (NASBO).[33] It is worth noting that at least as pertains to fiscal policy, Freudenthal's speech is not consistent with his actions: he both delivered the most Republican speech and recommended that largest spending increase. Is this disconnect unique or rare among governors or is it representative of a broader pattern?

Table 18: Summary Statistics of Key Policy Variables

Measure	Detail	N	Mean (Std. Dev.)	Min. (Case)	Max (Case)
Policy Liberalism	Based on EWM index, 2000, 2006 (updated Gray et al.)	79	.166 (3.14)	-5.11 (SD)	6.93 (CA)
State Ideology (%)	CBS/NYT Survey Data	293	-13.2 (9.1)	-31.4 (SD)	8 (VT)
State Partisanship (%)	CBS/NYT Survey Data	293	1.57 (11.3)	-25.62 (UT)	20.58 (AR)
Partisan Signal in Gov Speech	Wordscores	293	62.9 (10.4)	23.2 (Freudenthal WY '03)	91.3 (Siegelman AL '02)
Recommended Spending (% change)	NASBO data	283	3.56 (4.98)	-16.8 (Davis CA '03)	28.9 (Kulongski OR '05)
Actual Spending (% change)	NASBO data	285	5.33 (5.89)	-12.8 (Geringer WY '01)	36.6 (Freudenthal WY '05)

[33] Numbers drawn from Table A-4 of the "Fiscal Survey of the States" issued in the spring of each year by this organization. Spending figures omit all state-years in which natural resource windfalls make budgetary numbers incommensurate with those of other states (AK FYs '01-'07; WY FY '05) and state-years in which a state did not report disaggregated biennial data (TX FY '04; TX Gov. Recs. only FYs '02, '06). Page numbers listed refer to the 2004 version of this report.

Table 19 below is a matrix that displays the bivariate correlations among these variables. The first observation is that the partisan signal in governors' speeches and fiscal policy recommendations and outcomes are almost perfectly uncorrelated; there is no broad pattern in which Democratic speech is associated with spending growth and Republican speech with fiscal restraint. As for the measure of policy liberalism, it is highly correlated with the other static measure of political orientation within the states, public ideology. It is also strongly correlated with state partisanship, a somewhat less stable measure. It is

Table 19: Correlation Matrix of Key Policy Variables

	Policy Liberalism	State Ideology	State Partisanship	Gov Party	Gov Speech	Rec. Spending	Actual Spending
Policy Liberalism (N=79)	1.00	-	-	-	-	-	-
State Ideology (N=293)	.85 ***	1.00	-	-	-	-	-
State Partisanship (N=293)	.52 ***	.51 ***	1.00				
Governor's Party (N=293)	.13	.04	.14 *	1.00		-	-
Gov Partisan Speech (N=293)	.13	-.12	.22 ***	.32 ***	1.00	-	-
Recommended Spending (% Δ, N=283)	-.26	-.03	-.12	.03	.02	1.00	-
Actual Spending (% Δ N=285)	-.13	.11	-.05	.03	.02	.51 ***	1.00

Notes: Figures are bivariate correlations; * p < .05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001.

uncorrelated, however, with those measures that vary over time within states including the party identification of the governor, the partisan signal in gubernatorial speech and both recommended and actual spending.

The relationships among these variables implies that the practice of omitting the partisan identification of governors from models designed to predict policy liberalism (Erikson, Wright and McIver 1987) or including governors only as a contributing factor to a measure of overall government liberalism (Gray et al. 2004) may be appropriate in spite of concerns about the omission of governors from these models (McAtee 2001). Governors appear to fit within and strategically exploit, rather than to attempt to and succeed at changing, the long-term social and cultural factors that create a particularly ideological environment that determines a state's overall, relatively stable, level of policy liberalism. The extent to which governors are constrained by their political environments will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter which concludes this work. For the purposes of these analyses, though, that attempt to gauge the determinants of short-term changes in the political fortunes of governors, we must study those factors that meaningfully vary over these shorter periods heretofore the partisan signal in governors' speech and, here, their fiscal policies.

State Fiscal Policy Data

The fact that it is a measure that varies meaningfully within and among states over time, however, is not sole or even the chief reason that I have chosen changes in state general fund spending as my measure of policy. There are several reasons why change in state spending is a valid and salient measure of substantive governing behavior by state

executives. As discussed in greater detail below, it is an area of state policy over which the governor has a great deal of control particularly in states where governors have strong formal powers; it is not endogenous to speech as a measure of the policy proposals within speech (e.g., DiLeo 1998; Ferguson 1996) would be; it taps the central dimension of ideological and partisan conflict in the recent era (Stimson 1999); and this specific fiscal policy variable has been linked to electoral outcomes for governors in other studies (Lowry, Alt and Ferree 1998; Peltzman 1992).

One central assumption of this chapter is that governors have significant control over the budgetary process. Within the context of the data gathered for this project, governors' recommendations are correlated with actual spending outcomes at .51, and this relationship is statistically significant beyond the .001 level. Since this dissertation is not centrally about the role of the governor in the budgetary process instead of constructing my own model demonstrating that these recommendations are significant controlling for other factors such as the partisan composition of the legislature, I will rely again on the work of others.

Studies of the state executive's role in state budgeting have consistently found that the governor has a great deal of control over outcomes although this varies somewhat by state depending on the governor's level of formal budgetary powers (Beyle 1999, 1996; Peltzman 1992; Bernick 1979) such as the line-item veto (Abney and Lauth 1997, 1995). In most states, the governor's budget is the baseline for budget negotiations though there are certain exceptions such as in the State of Texas where the governor's budget is basically symbolic and is discarded at the start of the negotiations that primarily involve members of the state legislature (Rosenthal 1990). Governors' high degree of control over this process in most other states is dramatized by their ability to precisely control budgetary outcomes in

manners that are closely aligned with their electoral interests. Berkman and Barrileaux (2003), for example, showed that governors in competitive elections who are empowered relative to their state legislatures deliver statewide rather than localized benefits, although governors who were elected with comfortable margins generally defer to the desires of their state legislatures. The conclusion of scholarly analyses of the governors' role in the budgetary process, therefore, is that this is a policy area over which governors have a great deal of control conditioned on their formal powers, and governors who are not formally empowered within this process are the exception rather than the rule.

In order to gauge the impact of these important policy behaviors on gubernatorial approval and on vote shares, I calculate a series of independent variables based on data on fiscal policy proposals and outcomes. These variables operationalize different hypotheses that propose that alternate types of spending behavior – for example, moderate spending changes that are targeted to appeal to the political orientations of the median voter in a state or spending changes that are consistent with public expectations for these governors' partisan behavior – will be electorally advantageous. Specifically, I evaluate the impact of recommended and actual changes to general fund spending (NASBO) on these measures of governors' political success. The remainder of this section explains my use of *t+1* fiscal year data for these analyses (where t is the year in which a State of the State speech is delivered), why I use single-year rather than running average data, and then why I base my fiscal policy variables on "general fund" spending in particular.

Figure 10: Schematic Timeline of Typical State Calendar Year

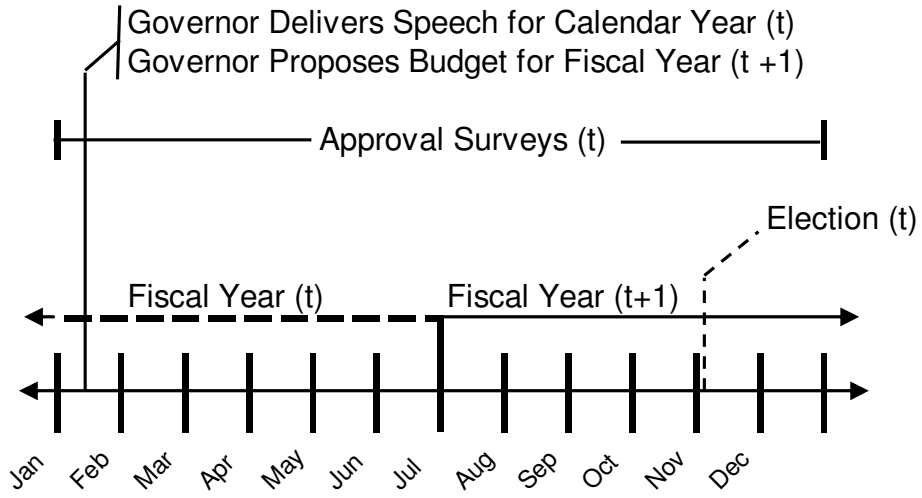


Figure 10 above is a schematic timeline of a typical[34] state calendar year. The election analyses that follow gauge the impact of fiscal year *t+1* data on calendar year *t* outcomes. This is because in all but four states, the fiscal year *t+1* begins on July 1st. of year *t.*[35] In the State of the State speech from year *t*, therefore, governors are outlining their budgetary recommendations for fiscal year *t+1*. By the time that the general election for year *t* takes place, governors have made their proposals for fiscal year *t+1* approximately ten months previous, and state governments have approved budgets the cuts or expansions in programs of which have been in effect for several months. Using fiscal year *t* data would

[34] State budgeting is a complex, almost arcane, process that is highly variable among the states. My attempt to capture the impacts of recommendations and spending make a series of simplifying assumptions in order to produce data that are comparable across states. One major difference is biennial budgeting. 30 states prepare annual budgets, 11 prepare two annual budgets biennially, and 9 states prepare true biennial budgets (Snell 1997). The NASBO estimates annual numbers for most states with biennial budgets.

[35] The exceptions to this rule are Alabama and Michigan in which the fiscal year begins on October 1st, Texas, in which it begins on September 1st and New York in which it begins on April 1 (NASBO, 102).

assume that the public is reacting, in the case of elections, to governors' recommendations that were issued approximately twenty-six months prior.

The choice of which year's actual fiscal policy data to use is somewhat more difficult in the case of public approval analyses since many of the surveys take place during the first six months of the year before the budget has been approved and cuts or expansions have gone into effect. However, the vast majority of these approval surveys do occur during the second half of the year in the run-up to elections and highly public budget deliberations between the governor and the legislature do take place during the first half of the year. I have chosen, therefore, to use fiscal year $t+1$ data for the calendar year t approval analyses as well. Using fiscal year t data would run contrary to our understanding of the determinants of the approval of state and national executives in which the public is reacting to current-year (even present moment) economic concerns and events rather than those of past years (see for review Erikson, MacKuen and Stimson 2002, chapters 2 and 3 (presidents); Hansen 1999 (governors)).

Further, I have chosen here not to use running averages as do some other studies of the impact of budgeting (e.g., Alt, Lowry and Ferree 1998). The assumption of this study is that public evaluations are influenced by budgetary choices both through interaction with programs the services of which are expanded or contracted within any given year and through media coverage of governors' recommendations and state budgetary choices. Programs are cut or increased in response to a single year budget, and the media generally do not cover budgetary changes as running averages.

More comprehensive data of media coverage are included in Chapter Two, but the following anecdote dramatizes the extent to which budget deliberations are often highly

public and how running averages can mask important multi-year dynamics. It is common for governors to propose an austerity budget that includes laying off teachers, shuttering public parks and releasing state prisoners if certain other spending is not brought into line or state revenues not increased through fees or taxes. In 2003, Republican Governor Bob Riley, at the beginning of a failed campaign to pass a ballot initiative that would have made his state's tax structure more equitable and efficient and that would have brought in more revenue, warned of the dire consequences of failing to act:

> "If we continue the policies of the past, these budget shortfalls will dictate a number of drastic cuts in the upcoming fiscal year. Let me try to put a human face on these numbers: 3,200 teachers and support personnel will be laid off. That is in addition to the 2,000 who will already lose their jobs this spring. … Forty-six troopers will be let go despite the fact that our trooper force is already 25 percent understaffed. … 734 employees in our judicial system will be laid off and jury trials suspended indefinitely … Seven of the 14 inpatient mental health facilities will be closed, while the program that provides medication to the indigent will have to be eliminated. … 450,000 of our citizens will lose access to healthcare because of the lack of funding for our Medicaid programs and 800,000 meals for the elderly will be eliminated."

In spite of these warnings and the fact that he couched in Christian terms the need for this initiative that would have raised taxes only on the well-off, his measure was defeated soundly at the ballot box. The following year he had changed his tune entirely:

> "We must endeavor to make our actions mirror the core values of our citizens. We are, first and foremost, a people of faith. Alabamians have an abiding faith in God, their families and their communities. They do not, however, have faith in their state government. Ladies and gentlemen, we must change that starting tonight. Since taking office just over one year ago, my administration - with your help - has made unprecedented cuts in our state budgets of over $400 million. That's over $1 million every day. This has been a joint effort that has seen many in this room reach across the aisle placing the people above partisanship, and we have accomplished more together than we ever could have alone. On behalf of the people of Alabama, who asked us to reduce spending, let me say thank you."

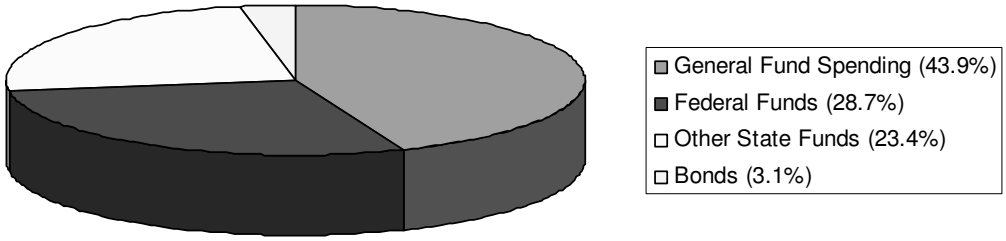
Even as Governor Riley delivered these very lines about the fiscal restraint forced upon him by Alabama voters, though, he was abandoning this commitment to reduced spending. For

fiscal year 2005, Governor Riley proposed a substantial increase in general fund spending (+8.7%). To a certain extent, this change is driven by the fact that this increase was in relation to the austerity budget of 2004, but it is nevertheless unmistakable as substantive policy action that is out of line with partisan rhetoric that remained Republican throughout his tenure. This large swing from restraint to profligacy would have been masked by a running average.

General Fund Spending

The programs and services that Riley threatened to cut, which are representative of the salient elements of budgets statewide, are generally paid for through a state's general fund. Change in this portion of the budget is the basis for the measures that opearationalize the hypotheses in the following section. What is "general fund" spending, though, and how does it compare, including in terms of scale with the other types of expenditures made be states in any given year? There are four major categories of state spending: general fund spending, federal funds, other state spending and bonds. Figure 11 on the following page displays the percentage breakdown among these different categories from 2003, the year which is the midpoint of the period of this study and during which the percentages were representative of the entire series. These numbers refer to the total amount spent within each of these categories by all states. "General fund" spending, which accounted for 43.9% of total state spending in 2003, is the largest area of spending for the states and the area over which they exercise the most control. The revenues that support general fund spending tend to be broad-based state taxes such as income and sales taxes rather than funds – such as lottery revenues – that are earmarked for specific projects.

Figure 11: Percentage of State Spending by Category



"Federal funds" come directly from the federal government and account for 28.7% of state spending. These expenditures are determined primarily through formulas based on population demographics and therefore variation in federal funds does not, for the most part, turn on the actions of state governors or legislators. "Other state funds," which accounted for 24.3% of state spending in 2003 is also an area in which spending is controlled by statute rather than through the budgeting process as these are expenditures that law restricts for specific government tasks and responsibilities. "For example, a gasoline tax dedicated to a highway trust fund would appear in the 'Other State Funds' column. For Medicaid, other state funds include provider taxes, fees, donations, assessments, and local funds" (NASBO, 2). Expenditures from the sale of bonds, primarily for funding of capital projects, accounted for 3.1% of state spending in 2003. Other projects that examine the connection between fiscal policy and spending also look at general fund spending (Alt, Lowry, and Ferree 1998; Beasley and Case 1995; Peltzman 1992). This and other projects evaluate changes in rather than absolute levels of state spending because the trend in these levels is continual growth. Evaluating change removes this trend from the series.

The hypotheses that follow apply both to my analysis of governors' recommended changes in government spending as well as to an analysis of the outcomes of spending behaviors. The results of the models using these two distinct sets of measures, however, will be evaluated separately. Governors' recommendations will influence public evaluations, particularly if the public understands that governors are operating within political systems that they do not entirely control. On the other hand, as leaders of their states, governors may be held accountable for actual policy outcomes and most work connecting fiscal policy to public evaluations pertains to actual levels of spending rather than governors' recommendations. The inclusion of the proposals is one of the novel contributions of this particular study.

Hypotheses

Within this work, I will test a series of the hypotheses that link fiscal policy to the political process, focusing on the influence of both recommended and actual fiscal policy first on governors' public approval and then on incumbents' vote shares in gubernatorial elections. The expectation of these hypotheses is the same whether I am evaluating the impact of governors' recommendations or of actual fiscal policy. For example, within the proximity framework, the assumption is that a public with a large majority of Republicans will prefer both for governors to deliver recommendations that include lower levels of spending and for the budgetary process to result in lower overall levels of spending.

In calculating these variables, I employ partisan identification rather than presidential voting as my measure of political orientation of state publics. Since the dimension of discourse of the Wordscores measure is a national dimension, it was appropriate to use a

national measure of political orientation. State spending, however, is a matter of state politics, and therefore it is appropriate to use a state-level measure of political orientation. Since presidential voting is highly correlated with state partisanship, the only major difference is in the expectations for the directional theory since its predictions are quite sensitive to the designation of the majority preference.

Take for example, a state that has a small majority of Republicans but supported the Democratic candidate for president, such as New Hampshire after 2004. Using presidential voting as the measure of the political orientation of this state would imply, according to the directional theory, that a governor will be rewarded for recommending and presiding over large spending increases. Using state partisanship as the measure of political orientation, however, would leads to the prediction that the state public will prefer large spending decreases. New Hampshire is a particularly good example of the appropriateness of using state partisanship in this case since its public has the political profile of being socially liberal (and therefore more akin to the Democratic Party) but fiscally conservative (and therefore more akin to the Republican Party). In spite of these important substantive differences, though, the results of the analysis the follow are robust to the choice of presidential voting as the measure of political orientation.

> *Fiscally conservative voters hypothesis – Governors' approval ratings and vote shares will be lower in direct proportion to the size of increases in general fund spending.*
>
> *Distributive politics hypothesis – Governors' approval ratings and vote shares will be higher in direct proportion to the size of increases in general fund spending.*

Peltzman (1992) posited and found evidence that all voters are fiscal conservatives and that they punish incumbents for increases in general fund spending, particularly if these

spending increases fund more generous welfare benefits.[36] This is inconsistent with the findings of later studies (Alt, Lowry and Ferree 1998), and also presents an interesting quandary. If voters across the political spectrum are fiscal conservatives, why do they consistently receive policy outcomes that are inconsistent with these political orientations? Though there are some governors, such as Jim Douglas in Vermont who managed to decrease the absolute amount of state spending, it is much more common for spending to increase in almost all states from year to year even after adjustments for inflation; the question usually is not of whether spending will increase but by how much.

Peltzman (1992) categorizes the inconsistency between broad public political orientations for lower aggregate spending as a principal-agent problem, but it may be more a matter of salience. The larger public may have an abstract preference for lower spending but this may not be a salient as issue as the continued funding of preferred governmental policy. Program and projects have important constituencies, clientele groups that will fight to guarantee increases in existing items within the budget as well as the addition of new line items. To the extent that these groups widely publicize their objections to any cuts in a manner that gains public traction and widely praise increases in funding, we will observe that overall spending increases are consistent with increased popularity and vote margins for governors.

[36] Critically, in spite of the fact that states are required to balance their budgets, his way not a study of public reactions to increased revenue (i.e., taxes) and, in fact, Peltzman did not find any evidence within the context of his study for a public reaction to increased taxes. This may be because governments have many different mechanisms for raising revenue including increasing fees and levying bonds that are not as obvious to the public as large scale income or sales taxes would be.

Proximity policy behavior hypothesis – Governors' approval ratings and vote shares will be lower in direct proportion to the distance between voter political orientations and the size of increases in general fund spending.

Directional policy behavior hypothesis – Governors' vote shares will be higher in direct proportion to the size of change in general fund spending that is consistent with voters' political orientations as measured by partisan identification.

The proximity and directional theories have been at the center of my analysis of up until this point. I have suggested that an examination of speech data is a natural test of the directional theory that pertains primarily to the manipulation of political symbols. All political actions, be they word choices, votes in legislatures or budget recommendations, are at least in part symbolic. The concrete nature of the recommendations and actual spending outcomes evaluated within the context of this chapter, however, are a more natural test of the proximity theory that posits that politicians present, through their actions a distinct political orientation and that voters prefer orientations that are proximate to their own. A further reason that the analysis of spending data is a more natural test of the proximity rather than directional theory is that there is usually only one "direction" to spending: growth. There are distinct differences in the relative level of spending changes among the states and among governors recommendations but, particularly in absolute terms, there are not two equally clear directions in this case as there are in an analysis of partisan speech.

It may be possible, therefore, as I posited in Chapter Two that there is no true conflict between the directional and proximity theories, that politicians can (and for electoral advantage should) pursue both simultaneously, stimulating the public strongly on the side of the political majority in regards to their symbolic actions such as speech and tailoring their behaviors closely to the political orientation of the public through their substantive policy actions. The predictions of proximity theory, therefore, are much stronger in this case. As

was the case for speech data, my measure of proximity is negative one times the absolute value of the residuals of the equation predicting spending from approval;[37] the smaller the distance between the orientation of the public and the recommendations or outcomes within the state, the more popular, or the higher vote margin, a governor will have.

However, all governmental actions are symbolic. This is particularly true when it comes to governors' budget recommendations. Whereas overall levels of spending may increase, this may occur while high-profile and popular programs are being cut. Therefore, if governors in Republican-dominated state wish to send a directional signal to the public while raising the overall level of spending, they can do so by publicizing their eliminating of certain governmental activities. Lower levels of relative spending increases, in this case, would be a proxy for such behavior even if they do not represent an actual decline in absolute levels of spending. This directional variable is spending change in states with Democratic majorities and the negative value of spending change in states with Republican majorities. States with Democratic majorities will prefer the greatest possible increases in spending; states with Republican majorities will prefer actual spending cuts or the smallest possible increases in spending.

> *Partisan expectations hypothesis – Republican governors' approval ratings and vote shares will increase if they preside over lower relative changes in general fund spending, Democratic governors' approval ratings and vote shares will increase if they preside over higher relative changes in general fund spending.*

Lowry, Alt and Ferree (1998) develop a "partisan model of voting on fiscal scale" in which they posit that voters select politicians because they want a particular set of fiscal policy outcomes. They elect Democrats because they want government to be expanded,

[37] This technique is explained in greater detail in Chapter Six.

Republicans if they want the size of government to shrink or for the growth to be more restrained. According to Beasley and Case (1995) they are justified in these expectations as the size of government grows much more, on average, under Democratic governors, particularly those who are term limited. If specific governors conform to those expectations, they can expect higher approval ratings and vote shares; if they deviate from these expectation they risk lower popularity and being voted out of office. This expectation, therefore, is that political outcomes will be positively associated with spending change for Democratic governors and the negative value of spending changes for Republican governors. Unlike Lowry, Alt and Ferree (1998) I do not model this hypothesis as unexpected change beyond the spending levels of the previous state governor to share this party label. Voters – according to the theory that underlies my models – react both to public deliberations about the budget and to their experience with program cuts and expansions neither of which account for past spending. This makes a more modest, and therefore perhaps more realistic, demand on the information levels of voters than does a model that includes information about past performance of executives with specific partisan labels.

Table 20 below summarizes these hypotheses and Table 21 on the following page presents some summary statistics on each of these variables. Since they are generated from the same underlying data, the models that follow test each of these theories in isolation. Including more than one leads to statistical artifacts that suggest, for example, that two variables are highly correlated because they are, in fact, both entirely uncorrelated with the dependent variable.

Table 20: Fiscal Policy Measures

Theory	Hypothesis	Measure	Directional Expectation
Fiscally Conservative Public	Public prefers reductions in spending	Change in spending †	-
Distributive Politics	Public prefers increases in spending	Change in spending	+
Directional	Public prefers extreme spending behaviors consistent with public political orientations	Change in spending for states with Democratic majorities, -1*spending for states with Republican majorities	+
Proximity	Public prefers spending changes proximate to its political orientation	-1* abs. value of residuals of equation predicting spending from state partisanship	+
Partisan Expectations	Public prefers extreme spending behaviors consistent with governors partisan identification	Change in spending for Democratic governors, -1* spending for Republican Governors	+

Notes: † The measure for the hypotheses that pertain to changes in recommended spending come from governors' budget recommendations; those that pertain to actual spending changes come from state expenditures (NASBO).

Table 21: Summary Statistics of Fiscal Policy Measures[38]

Measure	N	Mean (Std. Dev.)	Min. (Case)	Max (Case)
Proximity Spending	285	4.54 (3.72)	.021 (Vilsack IA, '06)	30.9 (Freudenthal WY, '05)
Directional Spending	285	1.19 (7.84)	-36.6 (Freudenthal WY, '05)	20.1 (Kulongoski OR, '05)
Expected Spending	285	-.260 (7.92)	-21.6 (Geringer WY, '00)	36.6 (Freudenthal WY, '05)
Proximity Recommended Spending	283	3.55 (3.44)	.002 (Janklow SD, '00)	25.4 (Kulongoski OR, '05)
Directional Recommended Spending	283	.775 (6.08)	-22.4 (Guinn NV, '03)	28.9 (Kulogoski OR, '05)
Expected Recommended Spending	283	-.194 (6.12)	-22.4 (Guinn NV, '03)	28.9 (Kulongoski OR, '05)

Notes: See reference 34 on page 175 for explanation of sample sizes of governors' recommendations and actual state outcomes.

Why generate so many different measures and test so many different hypotheses? In the case of all but the directional hypotheses, the answer is that each relies on a solid precedent within the literature as explained above. For example, it would not be responsible to omit a test of the proximity theory within a study of the impact on election results of policy positions taken by politicians. Likewise, the distributional, fiscally conservative voters, and expected spending hypotheses all test the conclusions of recent studies of this particular policy, state spending. Leaving out the directional hypothesis, on the other hand, would allow the results of this study to be spurious if the strong consistent evidence for the impact of directionally-preferred speech were products of actual policies rather than word choices describing those policies. Further, a major contribution of this study is including information both on governors recommended outcomes as well as the actual policy outcomes

[38] None of the spending measures are correlated with each other at more than .25 except for the actual and recommended variables for each hypothesis. As noted above, recommended spending and actual spending are correlated at .51. Proximity recommended and actual spending are correlated at .41. Directional recommended and actual spending and expected recommended and actual spending are correlated at .69.

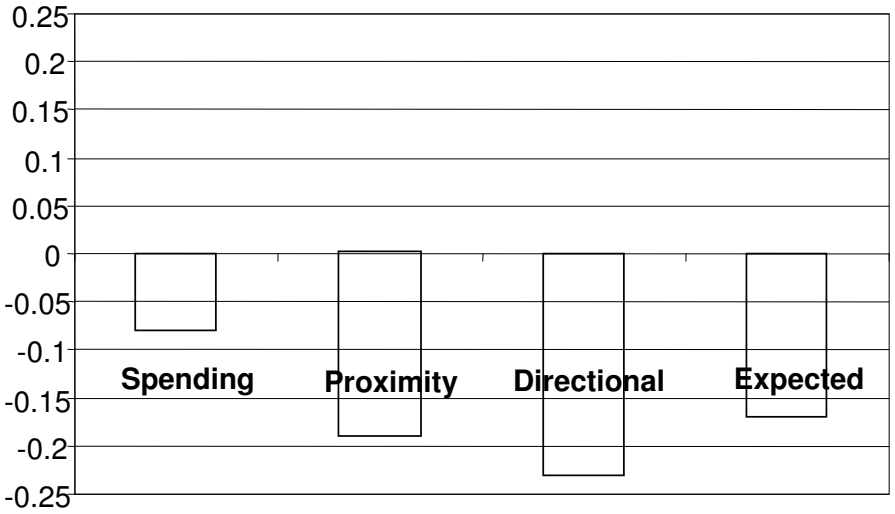
over which they preside. These factors result in eight different measures and ten separate hypotheses since the two directions for the overall spending tests measure are based on substantively distinct conjectures (overall fiscal conservatism and distributional politics).

Fiscal Policy and Public Approval

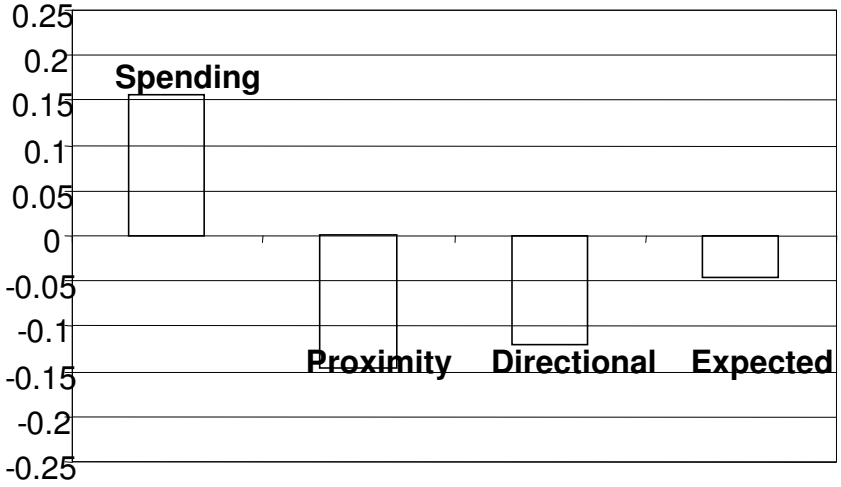
Figure 12 on the following page includes two bar graphs. The size of the bars in these graphs is equal to the magnitude of the coefficient of the effect of each of the variables described above on governors' public approval ratings controlling for other political factors including speech. Each of these estimates, therefore, is drawn from adding one of the policy measures from this chapter to the equation predicting approval from Chapter Five. The central finding is that it is not possible to reject the null for any of the ten hypotheses above as they relate to governors' public approval ratings. None of these coefficients are statistically significant. Further, most have the incorrect sign. For example, the further governors' spending recommendations are from the political orientation of the public, the more popular they are. However, neither of the alternative hypotheses for what types of extreme spending behaviors may be preferred by the public – those of either the directional or partisan expectations theories – are confirmed. I will discuss the implications of these results more fully in the discussion at the end of the chapter. Overall, however, these results suggest that the findings of the previous chapters related to the impact of partisan speech on public approval are not spurious due to the exclusion of policy, at least as these outcomes relate to government spending. This is the case whether I examine the impact of governors' recommendations or actual state spending outcomes.

Figure 12: Effect of Fiscal Policy
On Governors' Public Approval Ratings

Governors' Recommendations



Actual State Spending



Notes: N=283 (governors' recommendations); N=285 (actual state spending); Bars represent the marginal effects (coefficient magnitudes) of fiscal policy (per capita inflation adjusted change in general fund spending from NASBO data) on gubernatorial approval ratings (Job Approval Rating Database, Niemi, Siegelman and Beyle 2002) controlling for speech, economic and political factors from Table 13 on page 115.

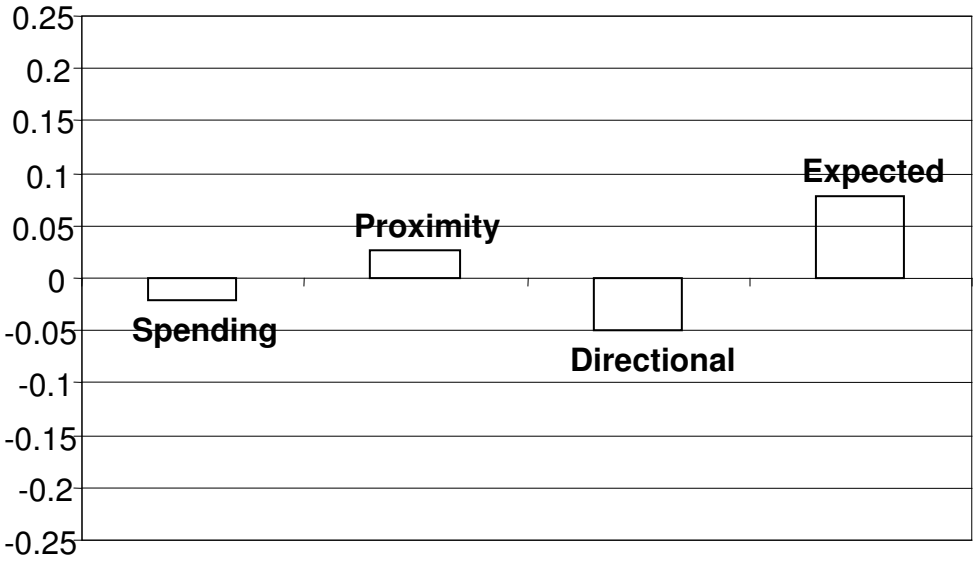
Fiscal Policy and Vote Share

The evidence that fiscal policy has an impact on election returns is similarly lacking. Figure 13 on the following page displays the magnitude of the coefficients for each hypothesis of how spending – either in the form of gubernatorial recommendations or actual policy outcomes – could impact vote shares. Only one of these unstandardized coefficients exceed a magnitude of .1 and approaches conventional levels of statistical significance – the partisan expectations hypothesis. This is within the context of an analysis in which, as was explained in greater detail in the previous chapter, every factor that other authors have shown to be influential in predicting vote shares within gubernatorial elections was correlated in the expected direction and almost all were statistically significant.

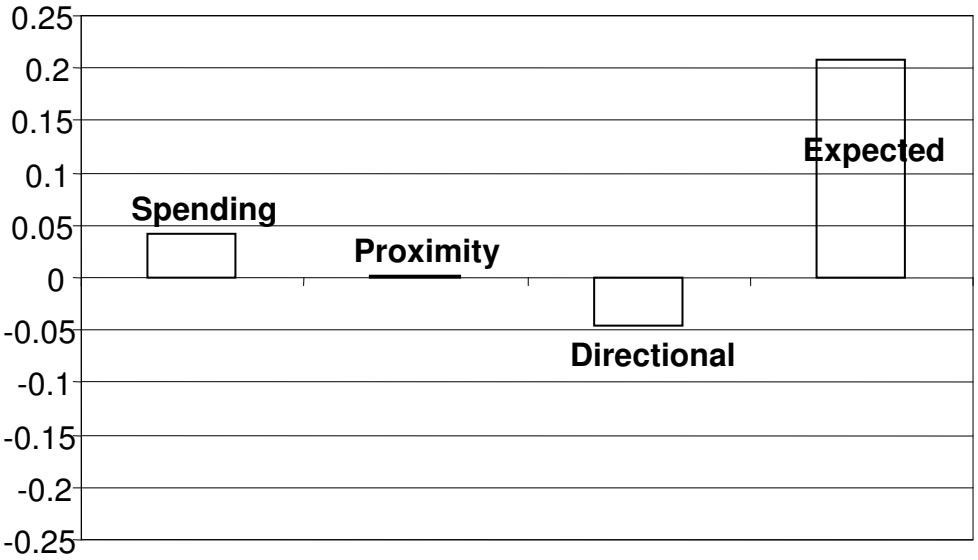
What of previous studies that have shown that spending had a significant impact on electoral returns, in particular in accordance with the "partisan expectations" hypothesis for fiscal policy articulated above in which Democrats spend more and Republican spend less? Model 1 in Table 22 on page 197 below replicates Lowry, Alt and Ferree's (1998) results and shows that partisan expectations for actual policy outcomes emerges as a statistically significant predictor of vote share without controlling for speech. However, Model 2 in this table displays the fact that these results are not robust to the inclusion of directional partisan signal. Therefore, political speech not only has an independent effect on electoral outcomes but also masks somewhat the expected impact of policy behaviors on governors' public success. Note, however, that the effect of introducing directional speech only reduces the impact of expected spending from .286 to .206. This is a significant reduction but not a complete masking. Further, it is still possible to reject the null of the expected spending hypothesis with over 90 percent confidence, although this is less than the conventionally

Figure 13: Effect of Fiscal Policy
On Incumbents' Vote Shares

Governors' Recommendations



Actual State Spending



Notes: N=54; Bars represent the marginal effects (coefficient magnitudes) of fiscal policy (per capita inflation adjusted change in general fund spending from NASBO data) on incumbent vote shares controlling for speech, economic, political and campaign factors from Table 17 on page 162; names correspond to hypotheses articulated in this chapter.

Table 22: The Impact of Partisan Speech and Fiscal Policy on Incumbents' Two-Party Vote Shares, 2000-2006

	Model 1 *Without Speech*	**Model 2** *With Speech*
Fiscal Policy		
Expected Spending (Ds % Δ, Rs complement)	.286 (.118) **	.206 (.127)
Partisan Speech		
Directional Signal (based on pres. voting)	-	.176 (.090) *
Economy		
National Unemployment (%)	-3.90 (1.43) **	-2.79 (1.48) *
Relative Unemployment (%)	-1.54 (.914) *	-1.99 (9.68) *
Other Political Variables		
Gov Party (1=Democrat)	-2.38 (1.51)	-1.75 (1.53)
Personal Appeal (resids of eq. predicting approval)	.174 (.107)	.227 (.102) *
Presidential Approval (%, complement for opp. party)	.113 (.076)	.113 (.077)
Normal Vote (State Partisanship, Gov's Party)	.196 (.103) *	.153 (.108)
Southern Democrat (1 = Southern Dem)	2.54 (3.27)	4.81 (3.62)
Election Variables		
Incumbent Spending ($, per cap)	.907 (.681)	.751 (.692)
Challenger Spending ($, per cap)	-1.83 (.793) *	-1.62 (.770) *
Challenger Quality (Bardwell 2005)	-1.18 (.516) *	-.811 (.546)
Constant	73.3 (7.64) **	66.4 (7.61) **
N	54	54
Adj. R2	.44	.47

Notes: OLS, robust standard errors clustered by governor in parentheses, one-tailed tests * p<.05, **p<.01.

acknowledged threshold of statistical significance. Also, the variable's dipping below the statistical threshold is partially due to the reduction in the magnitude of the coefficient but also to the increase in the standard error of the estimator. There is no evidence, though, that this increase in variance is due to multicollinearity. The variance inflation factor (vif) for each of these variables is less than 3; standardizing the variables as suggested by Aiken and West (1991) has no impact on the substantive results of the equation.

It is important to note that although the focus of this chapter has been on the determinants of two-party vote share for incumbents, there is also little evidence that fiscal policies have an impact on incumbents' likelihood of reelection. As explained in Chapter Six, the constraints that come from small sample maximum likelihood estimation may preclude valid testing of models such as these with large numbers of independent variables. However, it is worth noting that again the only fiscal policy variable that is correlated with likelihood of incumbent reelection is "expected" actual fiscal policy, and as with an analysis of the determinants of vote shares, this relationship is not robust to the inclusion of the partisan signal in governors' speech.

Discussion

What do these results imply about the relationship between speech and policy in influencing gubernatorial elections? Within the analyses of this chapter, directional speech masks somewhat the impact of public policy as represented by general fund spending changes. However, my goal here has been modest. The measures of recommended and actual change in general fund spending have served to operationalize several different alternatives to the central hypothesis of this dissertation that the public responds to the

partisan signal in gubernatorial speech. The testing of these alternative hypotheses reveals no evidence that the results of the models of previous chapters are spurious due to the exclusion of these measures of policy change. A thorough examination of the interrelationship of speech and policy in influencing public outcomes, though, would require additional research that more fully captures governors' role in the policy process; this is not a work that is centrally about state policy. Within this current analysis, however, I can discern a few patterns that are relevant to developing a more full understanding of the relationship between speech and policy.

First, the partial masking effect of directional speech on the impact of expected spending is driven primarily by the behaviors of Democratic governors; there is no relationship between expected spending and directional speech among Republicans. For Republican governors, these variables are correlated only at .05. However, among Democrats, these variables are correlated at .33, a modest degree of collinearity commensurate with the partial masking effect presented in Table 22 above. What this means in substantive terms is that the Democratic governors who increase spending the most also deliver the clearest partisan signal consistent with the political orientation of their public. It appears that the biggest Democratic spenders may also be the most politically savvy speakers.

Dave Freudenthal is a prime example of a Democratic governor who both presided over large spending increases and delivered strong directionally-preferred speech. Spending increased dramatically during while he was governor (36.6% in the year of the election in this dataset) consistent with public expectations for Democrat. Also, as noted throughout this work, he delivered speeches with an extremely strong Republican partisan signal consistent

with the political orientation of the public in Wyoming. Based on the point observations related to the tenure of Dave Freudenthal alone, therefore, it is not possible to ascertain whether it was his partisan speech or his "expected" fiscal policy behavior that influenced his positive public evaluations.

Critically, though, it is relatively uncommon for governors – Republicans in particular but this is also true for many Democrats – to match public political orientations through speech while fulfilling partisan expectations in terms of the spending changes over which they preside. A representative case, in this instance, is Mike Johanns of Nebraska who, as noted in Chapter Six, delivered speeches with an extremely clear Republican signal (as befits the leader of a state that consistently supported Republican presidential candidates during this time) but who presided over increased spending (a 1.6 percentage point increase in the year of the election in this dataset). This was an "unexpected" behavior for a Republican, but Johanns, like Freudenthal, was reelected by a large margin consistent with the hypothesis that the public is attuned to the partisan signal within the speech of these governors. These point estimates are highlighted in Figures 14 and 15 on the following page. They show that Freudenthal is an outlier who influences the statistical result that suggests that state publics reward governors for expected fiscal policy outcomes in terms of changes in general fund spending. However, he is simply part of a larger, more robust pattern of state publics rewarding governors for directionally-preferred partisan speech. The studentized residual for the data point of Freudenthal in 2005 is 54% larger within the context of an equation predicting vote share from expected spending than within the context of an equation predicting vote share from directional speech. Both equations, however, are robust to the elimination of Freudenthal from the analysis.

Figure 14: Scatterplot of Relationship of Two-Party Vote and Expected Spending

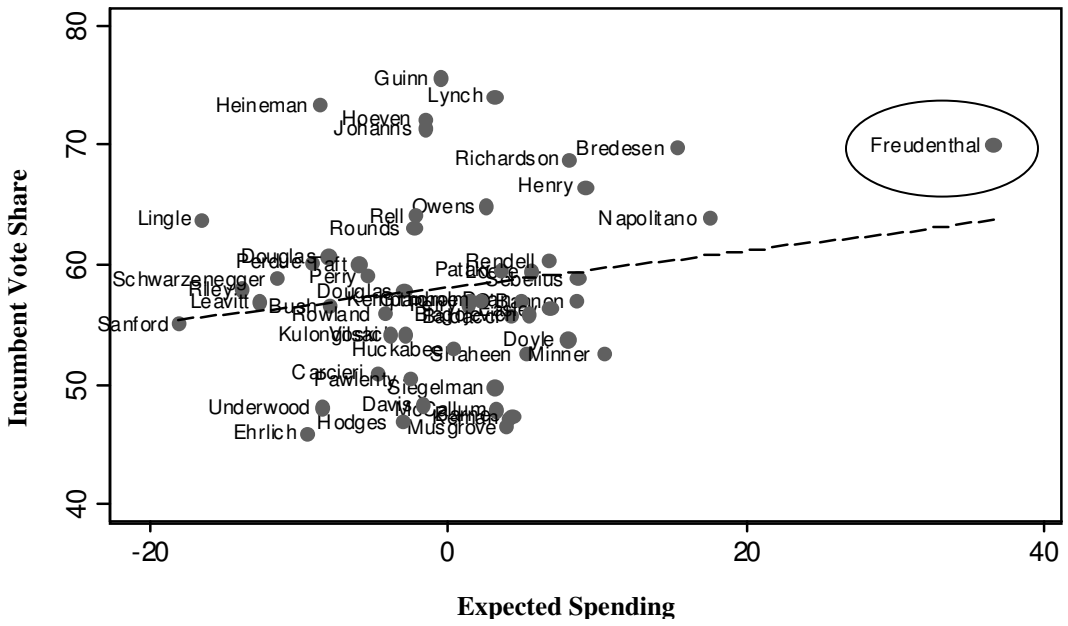
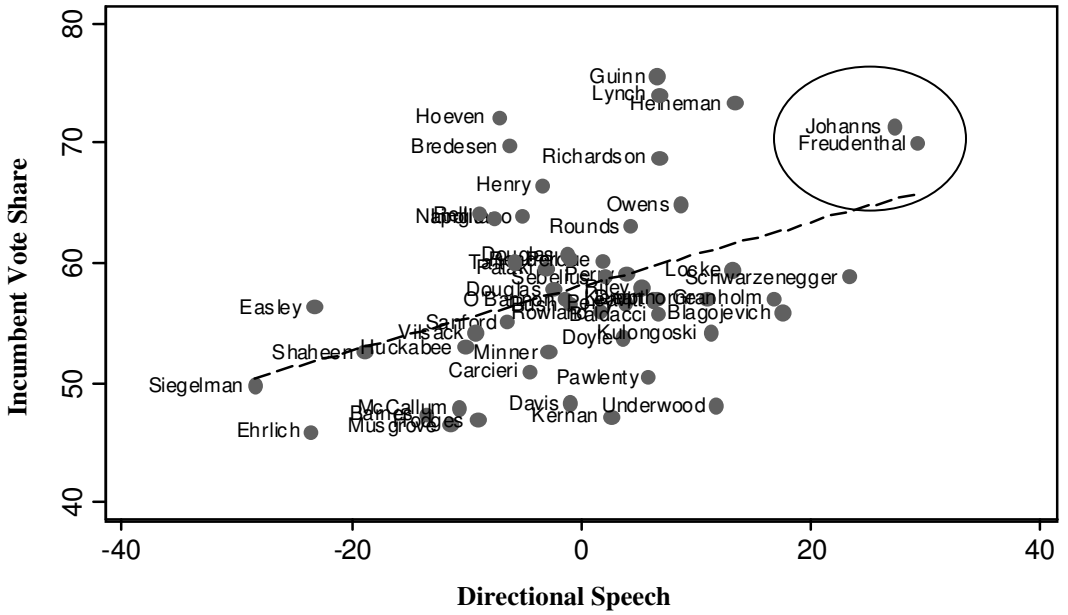


Figure 15: Scatterplot of Relationship of Two-Party Vote and Directional Speech



This leads to a second observation about the connection between speech and policy. Though inconsistent with partisan expectations that he would cut spending, Johanns' tenure does represent a period of relative fiscal restraint even among Republicans. In fact, the mean values of actual spending changes under Republicans (5.1%) and under Democrats (5.8%) are statistically indistinguishable. More notable, perhaps, the *recommended* spending changes of Republicans (3.4%) and those of Democrats (3.7%) are also statistically indistinguishable.[39] Republicans simply are not, on average, more fiscally conservative than are Democrats. As was suggested in the introductory chapter, many governors, therefore, do appear to be "having it both ways," with several marked examples of governors who delivered strong Republican signals in their speech but then recommended and presided over large spending increases. Republicans in this group include Bob Riley of Alabama (7.5% and 13.9% increases respectively in 2006), Mark Sanford of South Carolina (11.7% and 18.1% in 2006), and Mike Johanns' successor in Nebraska, Dave Heineman (7.5% and 8.6% in 2006).

These point estimates, however, do not represent an overall pattern of uniquely Republican duplicity as it relates to speech and spending. There is a great deal of variation among Republicans: the mean value of recommended spending among Republicans (3.43%) is smaller than its standard deviation (4.39%). There are many Republicans during this time who did advocate for and preside over spending cuts such as Bill Owens of Colorado (-7.8% and -2.5% respectively in 2002) and George Pataki of New York (-3.5% and -3% in 2002).

[39] The inability to confirm the significance of the difference of these means is due to the large standard deviations within these subsets of governors. Statistics used for difference of means test of actual spending outcomes (t=.592): Republicans n=157, μ= 5.09, σ = 5.48; Democrats n = 123, μ = 5.50, σ = 6.30; for difference of means test of recommended spending outcomes (t=.461) of Republicans n=155, μ= 3.43, σ = 4.39; Democrats n = 123, μ = 3.70, σ = 5.52.

Simply put, there is no connection between partisan identification and recommended or actual spending changes and, as shown above, no connection between these changes and electoral outcomes. This is in marked contrast to the central finding of this dissertation related to the partisan signal in speech. As shown in Chapters Five and Six, there is a strong connection between directional speech and governors' public approval ratings and incumbents' vote shares and chances of reelection and also, as shown in Chapter Four, a strong and significant relationship between partisan signal in speech and the partisan identification of governors.

Future research could further unpack the relationship of speech and policy through, for example, more detailed research examining whether governors who pursue policy actions they assume will be unpopular make a conscious effort to disguise these actions through speech they assume will be popular. Though the results of this suggest that this may be the case, there is no evidence of a particular type of systematic mendacity. Though some of the individual Republican governors mentioned above may have benefited from recommending higher spending to appease narrow interests while portraying themselves as fiscal conservatives, this is not a pattern that is statistically discernable either within the entire dataset or in the subset of Republican governors only.

Does Policy Matter?

Why do these analyses demonstrate little connection between electoral outcomes and either the fiscal policy recommendations of governors or actual spending within states? The first answer may be that I have the wrong measure, that changes in general fund spending do not capture the substantive policy activity that is relevant to the members of state publics.

The public may be quite aware of, for example, landmark pieces of legislation pursued successfully or unsuccessfully by governors, understand the substantive content of these policies to a reasonable extent, and hold governors accountable for their pursuit of policies that are consistent with public political orientations or, alternately, for their degree of success in accomplishing a set of pre-determined policy goals. Again, the majority of the work in this area has examined the other direction of the causal arrow looking at how various factors influence gubernatorial success within the legislative arena (Ferguson 2003) rather than how legislative success begets higher approval ratings or larger margins of victory in subsequent elections. However, it is possible that publics are attuned to success of landmark policy initiatives even if they are not responsive to fiscal policy behaviors as measured in this study. Even if there are other measures of state policy that would demonstrate a clear connection between governors' behaviors and public evaluations, though, it is quite striking that one of the most important area of state policy – one over which the governor has a great deal of control – appears not to influence approval and vote shares as much as does the partisan signal in State of the State speeches.

Another possibility is that publics are attuned to the policies their governors pursue as well as to the symbolic partisan content speeches, but focus on what they see as the *results* of these policies. Though it is questionable whether governors are able to control the direction of state economies through their fiscal and economic development policies and other governance choices, publics do react to the state of the economy when evaluating their governors. The public may be aware of government spending but infer that increases and decreases were worthwhile only to the extent that they lead to an improved economy for the state.

A third possibility is that I have measured policy behaviors accurately but that symbolic politics really do predominate. Economics and scandal still matter in this account but not due to public inferences about the implications of governors' policy choices in influencing the health of the state economy. As Edelman put it in the quote that begun this work, "The achievement of a particular result is therefore not ordinarily a major influence upon the continued incumbency of a leader or upon public restiveness or satisfaction though it may become so in rare cases of inflexibility or obtuseness. What counts normally is the affective response of political groupings in particular situations" (1964, 74). Political orientations – as presented through charged partisan language rather than as reduced entirely to partisan identification – may simply be more important in influencing public evaluations than are substantive policy behaviors.

One piece of this analysis in particular increases my confidence that symbolic politics overwhelms at least the impact of expected fiscal policy. I was able to replicate Alt, Lowry and Ferree's (1998) results that partisan expectations influence electoral outcomes but then showed that this electoral connection of policy to public outcomes was attenuated with the addition of partisan language to an analysis of the determinants of incumbents' vote shares. There is some limited evidence that state publics may expect spending increases from Democrats and decreases from Republicans, but I cannot reject the null of this hypothesis with as great a degree of confidence once partisan signal has been added to the equation.

To say that directional speech "partially masks" the impact of expected spending, however, is not to say that the public has strong partisan expectation and is merely mislead by speech into thinking that Democrats spend more and Republicans spend less. If this were the case then Democratic governors who decreased spending should deliver strong

Democratic speeches and Republican governors who increased spending should deliver strong Republican speeches. However, the opposite is often true. Particularly in states with Republican majorities, Democratic governors used speech not to highlight but to disguise the fact that they increased spending. To return to one of the central puzzles of this work, Democratic minority governors succeeded not because the Republican majorities in their states suddenly decided that they wanted spending increases and therefore reelected Democrats when they delivered on expectations for a typically Democratic profligacy in spending behaviors. They succeeded because they were able to convince these Republican majorities precisely that they would not do what was expected of Democrats.

Some were consistently atypical. Some Democratic governors made word choices within their State of the State speeches that portrayed them as more aligned with the Republican Party and also cut spending within their state. Democrat Brad Henry of Oklahoma is an example of such a governor. The average partisan signal in his speeches was one more Republican than the average speech and he recommended overall spending decreases in his state in each year of his tenure. There is, however, no pattern of governors behaving in this manner, no statistical relationship between partisan signal and spending.

Masking may be occurring in some cases, but not in the service of reinforcing partisan expectations. The public may truly care about policy recommendations and outcomes, and even about spending specifically, but be misled by governors' partisan speech. Under this account, it is not the words themselves that appeal to the members of the public but the substantive policy outcomes that these words imply. One editorialist excerpted above (Sniffin 2007) appears to believe that the Republican-sounding Freudenthal was also fiscally conservative, reasoning from speech to actions in a way that may be common even among

political elites who ostensibly have ready access to information about overall levels of government spending. Further, the reason that this editorial writer approved of Freudenthal was because he assumed that the governor was engaging in behavior consistent with pubic preferences in Wyoming. Like this editorial writer, the public may simply assume that governors who talk like Democrats increase spending and those who talk like Republicans cut spending. In this belief, they would be deceived.

This may be an artifact of this particular political era of polarization when partisan language had such currency and was even identified with the opposed colors of red and blue and when Congressional voting patterns were highly unidimensional (McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal 2006). The paradox is that in eras dominated by polarized partisan factions, politicians may be able to exploit these clear distinctions in order to portray themselves as atypical representatives of their parties. They would have therefore more, rather than less, freedom to individuate within this highly delineated political structure. It may be that during other eras governors cannot avail themselves of such clear political signals in order to overcome public assumptions based on party identification. On the other hand, governors may be *more* capable of escaping their own partisan labels in eras less clearly defined by polarized conflict, but the manner in which they do so may not be as clearly quantifiable through partisan language. Regardless, during this period it appears to be these politically-charged word choices, rather than policy, as represented by recommended or actual spending changes, to which the public is attuned.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

The introductory chapter of this dissertation posed a question with important implications for representation: Do citizens in the American states elect governors based on the affective appeal of their language and – barring scandal or a significant economic downturn – are these governors then free to lead their states according to whatever substantive policy agenda they see fit to advance? The answer within the context of this study is a qualified yes. This work does not contain an adequately comprehensive account of governors' policy behaviors to deliver an unconditional affirmative response. However, it is the finding of multiple empirical analyses presented here that state publics react to the charged partisan words in gubernatorial public addresses. Further, the previous chapter showed the directional signal in these speeches better explains incumbents' vote shares than does an important area of policy activity, changes in general fund spending.

One important qualification to this conclusion is foreshadowed in the question itself: the influence of the symbolic politics of partisan speech does not supersede that of economics or public scandals. The public approval ratings of governors embroiled in scandals were, on average, eighteen points lower, and no governors who suffered from public scandal during this time period ran for reelection. An example of a public official whose term in office was scandal-ridden is Bob Wise of West Virginia. This final chapter will start by considering his case, as well as that of his successor, Joseph Manchin III, as they help to illustrate the answers to some of the key theoretical questions of this work. I will then summarize the findings of this study, placing them in the context of a schematic model of the impact of

partisan speech on gubernatorial elections and discussing their implications for representation.

Two Democrats from West Virginia

In 2004, the citizens of West Virginia elected Democrat Joseph Manchin III by a 13.5 percentage point margin over his Republican opponent Monty Warner. In this same year, Republican George W. Bush had a twelve percentage point advantage in this state over his Democratic opponent John Kerry. This doubled Bush's six percentage point margin over Gore from 2000. Why did West Virginia's voters simultaneously support a Republican presidential candidate and a Democratic gubernatorial candidate? One explanation[40] is that the Republican and Democrat in question presented themselves as politically akin to each other through their use of charged partisan language, and it was the similar orientations implied through their word choices to which voters in this state responded positively.

To the extent that the speech within his subsequent State of the State addresses is consistent with that within his campaign communication (as media accounts suggest that it was (Nyden 2008)), Manchin did present himself as an atypical Democrat. The mean partisan signal in his two speeches in this study is -7.1 percentage points more Republican than the average speech. This is the 4th most Republican partisan signal among Democrats during this period trailing only that within the speeches of Dave Freudenthal of Wyoming, Mel Carnahan of Missouri and Ben Cayetano of Hawaii.

The "directional theory" of position taking predicts that this strong signal on the side of the political majority will lead to public success. However, it is not obvious that this is the

[40] There are, of course, many other explanations for this phenomenon not presented and tested here; this study is not centrally about split-ticket voting.

optimal strategy in this case for at least three different reasons. First, the most widely-adopted theory of position-taking in elections, the "proximity theory," predicts that moderate rather than extreme stances will be politically advantageous except for cases in which the median voter is ideologically extreme. Second, a majority of voters within West Virginia identify as members of the Democratic Party. Therefore, to the extent that Manchin is one of the minority party governors whose success is one of the puzzles at the heart of this inquiry, his is a special case. He may be in the political minority as defined by presidential voting but he is in the political majority as defined by party identification. Third, as mentioned earlier in this study, there is strong experimental evidence (Rahn 1993) to suggest that politicians cannot profitably adopt the language and positions of the other party.

Indeed, his predecessor in the office of governor, Democratic Governor Bob Wise, pursued a very different rhetorical strategy. The mean Wordscore for his four speeches included in this study is only -0.8 percentage points more Republican than the average speech. He was very consistent in avoiding a strong partisan signal: each of his individual speeches has a Wordscore that is within two percentage points of the mean score of the entire set of 293 speeches. The proximity theory of politics predicts that these moderate positions should lead to political success within a state such as West Virginia that is near to the middle of the political spectrum. Further, as this speech does not contain a strong Republican signal, it does not run the risk, as does Manchin's speech, of creating cognitive dissonance that would turn voters off to his message.

What is the content of these speeches of these two governors? Further, is the character of and partisan signal in these addresses consistent with their policy behaviors? Did Manchin's delivery of a strong partisan signal on the side of the political majority, as

defined by presidential voting, translate into public success? Or was Bob Wise's strategy of rhetorical moderation, at least as measured by Wordscores, more politically advantageous? These are critical cases since these governors are cross-pressured due to their state context in which a Democratic majority supported the Republican presidential candidate during this time. However, in spite of these pressures, the experience of these governors is representative of the general findings of this study, and therefore speaks to the power of the directional hypothesis of partisan speech to explain outcomes in many different types of political environments.

Contrast the opening sections of two State of the State speeches from West Virginia delivered four years apart. In 2001, Bob Wise focused on what he perceived as being the demands of the citizens of his state:

> "The people demand that we no longer accept the idea that West Virginia should take last place at the nation's table. They demand that we educate our children so that they can have better lives and take advantage of the job opportunities we will create and at the same time, they demand that we teach by example and by word the values that have made this a great state and a great nation. They demand that we improve our healthcare, and that we provide the means for each citizen to have access to health care. They demand that we make our economy stronger, and that we participate fully in the new economy based on information and technology. They demand that we protect the special places that make West Virginia what it is, and preserve our water, our air and our land for future generations to enjoy."

Chapter Three explained the choice of Wordscores (Laver et al. 2003; Martin and Vanberg 2008) and the method for calculating the partisan signal in gubernatorial speech using this technique of quantitative content analysis. This particular speech contained no strong partisan signal according to this measure; in fact, it receives the exact average Wordscore. Wise's language balanced Democratic word choices such as "job" and "educate" (as shown in Chapter Three, these are the eleventh and thirty-second most influential words in determining a Democratic placement for a speech out of a set of over twelve thousand unique

word stems) with Republican words such as "values" and "economy" (both within the top ten percent most influential Republican words).

As noted above, the speeches of Joe Manchin contained a strong Republican partisan signal. In 2005, he spoke about the work of a special session of the West Virginia state legislature he had called in response to a budgetary crisis:

> "Working together … we took the bold steps necessary to show the nation that West Virginia is serious about getting our house in order and our people back to work. … You allowed me the opportunity, as Governor, to begin to reorganize the executive branch of state government with the goal of being more accountable for our actions and more coordinated in our economic development efforts. You took responsibility for managing the state's long-term pension debts in a common-sense way that provides the ultimate protection for our retirees. … I cannot stress to you enough how important it is that you and your family members support and vote in favor of establishing a fixed mortgage payment to pay off our unfunded liabilities. This will not cost you or the state one more penny; on the contrary, it will save the state hundreds of millions of dollars, and it will pave the way at long last for economic stability and security for our children and grandchildren."

Though Manchin's speech contains influential Democratic words such as "children" (50^{th}), its primary focus is on the institutions of state government such as the "legislature" and the "governor" (the 8^{th} and 9^{th} most influential Republican words respectively). Notably, this introductory passage from Manchin's speech focuses explicitly on fiscal responsibility, getting West Virginia's "house in order." It would be a reasonable assumption to conclude, therefore, that Wise, with his focus on all of the demands that the people have made on the government, would be willing to spend generously to respond to those demands. On the other hand, the strong Republican signal in Manchin's speech may imply budgetary responsibility, and he specifically trumpets his fiscally conservative actions. Therefore, one might assume that he proposed greater spending cuts than did Wise.

These assumptions would be incorrect. Both Wise and Manchin actually proposed decreases in the level of spending but, in the years of these speeches, Wise actually proposed

a larger cut (-3.1%) than did his successor (-2.2%). Neither of these governors was effective in turning his recommendations into actual spending decreases within his state, but Wise was marginally more successful, limiting the spending increase to 10.2% whereas Manchin presided over a spending increase of 13.2%.

The lack of connection between these partisan speech patterns and public spending outcomes in these cases is representative of the larger dataset in which these variables are entirely uncorrelated.[41] Also important is that fact that these Democrats both proposed spending cuts. Current public narratives to the contrary, Democratic governors during this period did not recommend or preside over significantly larger spending increases than did Republicans. In fact, there was no statistically discernable connection between gubernatorial partisanship and recommended or actual changes in state spending.

In terms of political outcomes, an extramarital scandal involving a state employee rendered moot the question of whether Governor Wise appeared through his language to be out of step with the political orientation of the public in West Virginia, and Joe Manchin did not stand for reelection during the time period of this study. However, Manchin had significantly higher approval ratings during his first two years (69%) in office than did Wise (53.5%).[42] This is consistent with the findings of Chapter Five that link higher public approval ratings with the delivery of speeches that contain a strong signal consistent with a state's pattern of presidential voting. Responding to the political orientation of West

[41] The delivery of directionally-preferred speeches was positively correlated, among Democrats, with presiding over increases in general fund spending. I explain the implications of this more fully in Chapter 7.

[42] Though the analyses of this work show no statistically discernable over-time decay within the approval ratings of governors, I refer to the difference between their respective first two years here for purpose of comparability and because Wise's burgeoning public scandal may have unduly influenced his approval ratings during the final two years of his term.

Virginians expressed through their participation in presidential elections during this time, Manchin adopted the preferred language of the Republican Party and was rewarded with greater public success in the form of high public approval ratings in spite of an ongoing economic downturn.

Also central to understanding the scope of the findings of this study is the observation that Manchin was able to use "Republican language" effectively even though this language was inconsistent with his own partisan identification as a Democrat. In spite of experimental evidence to the contrary (Rahn 1993), the results of this study show that governors can effectively adopt the language associated with the opposite party. The fact that Manchin was able to do so even in a state such as West Virginia that has a majority of Democratic partisans is quite telling. These findings, though, are not limited to states such as West Virginia: there are also Democratic governors – such as Dave Freudenthal of Wyoming, Mel Carnahan of Missouri, and Tim Kaine of Virginia – who have effectively adopted the language of the Republican political majority to be successful. The same is the case for Republicans – such as Arnold Schwarzenegger of California and Christine Todd Whitman of New Jersey and Lincoln Almond of Rhode Island– adopting Democratic language. Minority party governors who did not adopt majority language – such as Joe Kernan of Indiana and Scott McCallum of Wisconsin – were not politically successful and were among the few incumbents to be defeated during this time. The affective appeal of language appears rooted, therefore, not in its being delivered by a politician with a particular partisan identification but in its being the preferred language of the political majority.

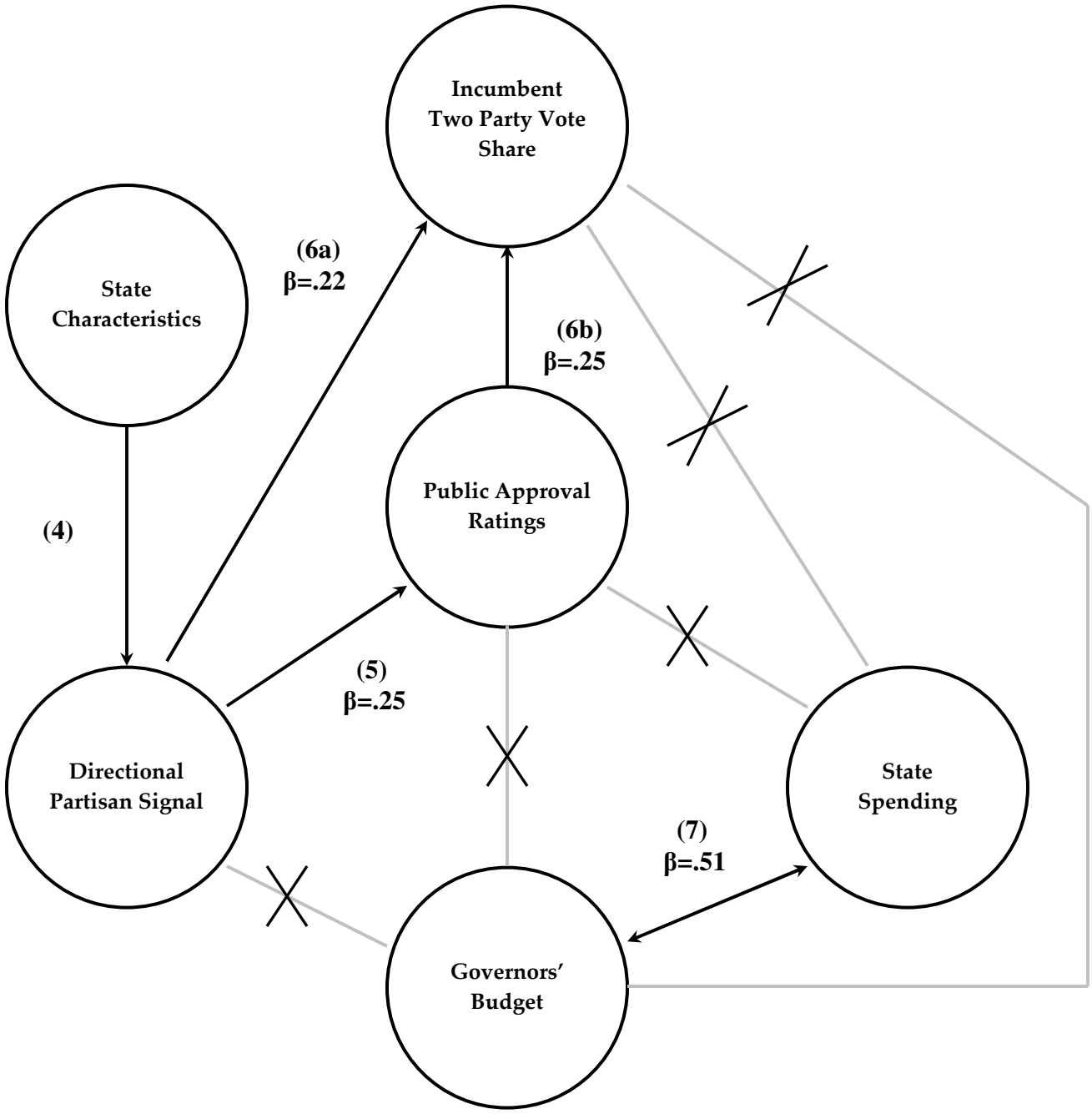
Partisan Language and Political Context

The fact that partisan speech is a product of its political context is one of the central empirical observations at the heart of this study. The first examination of this phenomenon had the Wordscores measure of partisan signal in gubernatorial speech as its dependent variable. Figure 16 on the following page summarizes the results of this and the other statistical analyses of this work within the context of a schematic model of the role of the partisan signal in speech in explaining gubernatorial success as measured by public approval ratings and the two-party vote shares of incumbent governors.

Chapter Four, denoted in the figure by the arrow marked "(4)," presented evidence that Republican governors deliver speeches that emerge as "more Republican" according to this measure but, further, that partisan signal in speech is statistically related to the CBS/NYT survey measure of state partisanship. In addition to confirmation of these basic expectations of the place speech within its political context, I found evidence for more subtle hypotheses such as the proposition that states with a higher proportion of African-Americans (who have for the past fifty years strongly supported the Democratic Party) have governors who deliver more Democratic speeches.

The chapter also included other interesting empirical observations such as the fact that female governors deliver, on average, more Republican speeches, perhaps in an attempt to counterbalance gender-based preconceptions and that governors from traditional religious denominations also deliver speeches that are more Republican, although this latter pattern was not apparent within the fully specified model. Finally, perhaps the most intriguing result of this chapter was its strong confirmation of the enduring role of political culture in

Figure 16: Partisan Speech, Fiscal Policy, Public Approval Ratings and Incumbent Vote Share among American State Governors, 2000-2006



structuring state political environments. Governors within individualistic cultures closely tailor their speeches to public political orientations, consistent with the description of this culture as one in which politicians envision their role as responding to the citizens of their states as a company responds to its consumers. Responsiveness, so defined, was more tenuous within moralistic cultures and almost absent within traditionalistic cultures. This is consistent with patterns identified in other scholarship about political cultures in the American states.

The intention of Chapter Four was to serve as an exploratory analysis of the connection between governors' partisan speech, their own party identifications and their political environments. Though I did not posit and test strong causal hypotheses in this chapter, the observations summarized above are important confirmations of the face validity of the Wordscores measure. They show that there are patterns in speech discernable through a measure that has a substantive meaning comprehensible even to people with only a passing knowledge of American politics and that relies on simple set of mathematical equations that I outlined within the context of this work within Chapter Three.

It was not at all obvious that I would be able to construct and validate such a measure of the content of speeches delivered within contexts as diverse as that of the fifty American. Governors are bound only informally to the conventions that these speeches share; speech within this context, therefore, is less formally structured than within, for example, legislative debates on individual policy issues. Furthermore, governors' own personal speaking styles or their addressing of state-specific policy issues could swamp any signal related systematically to the language of party platforms or any other national dimension of discourse.

The simple, comprehensible nature of this measure and the fact that it is related to governors' partisan identifications and political environments has two important implications. The first is that these speech patterns may be noticeable to the general public or, at least, to opinion elites who translate governors' speech into publicized accounts of their political orientations, estimations of governors' political orientations that may be relatively consistent across people and reports. The second implication is that governors may benefit from the extent to which placements along this discernable dimension relates to the political orientations of their state publics.[43]

However, many questions remained unanswered perhaps the chief of which is what precise type of partisan signal the public rewards. Do state publics appear, on average, to prefer governors who avoid strong partisan signals? Such behavior may benefit governors in their attempt to mirror the median – and therefore generally moderate – political orientation within their state. Alternately, avoiding charged partisan language may help governors to appear as Heads of State who can effectively build coalitions across party lines. Or, on the other hand do state publics react positively to politicians who send strong partisan signals through their language, signals that telegraph a clear alignment with the political majority? Finally, how do we decide what the preferred political orientation of a state is, given that many states – particularly in the South – with a majority of citizens who identify as Democrats routinely support Republican national political candidates?

[43] As mentioned in Chapter Two, though, this behavior among governors need not amount to a self-conscious rational maximization of utility. In this study, I do not claim that governors are aware of the specific signals they are sending through their speech, I study only the implications of these signals as quantified through the Wordscores measure.

Partisan Speech, Public Approval and Electoral Outcomes

The first answer these questions came within the context of an analysis of the determinants of the public approval ratings of governors. High levels of public approval are a prerequisite for political success, in particular within the legislative arena, and they are associated with greater vote shares and chances of reelection for incumbents. One theoretical puzzle at the heart of this work was why governors are able to be successful within states in which they are in the minority party. If it could be shown that these governors can overcome their minority status by nurturing an affective connection with the political majority through the adoption of charged political language thereby effectively boosting their public approval ratings, this would be a strong foundation for political success.

Chapter Five showed that just such a connection exists, represented by the arrow marked "(5)" in Figure 16 above. Further, this relationship persists when controlling for the other determinants of public approval such as gubernatorial scandal and the health of the economy. The magnitude of this effect is .25 and it is statistically significant beyond the .01 level. The substantive impact of this effect is modest but meaningful: a one standard deviation change in directional speech (10.4 percentage points) leads to a 2.6 percentage point increase in public approval ratings of governors. This result is striking particularly in light of the imperfect nature of any variable quantifying a political behavior as unconstricted as political speech. In spite of the complexity of speech, the word choices appear to communicate a signal to the public. That it is a strong signal on the side of the political majority, rather than a moderate signal that approximates the political orientation of the median voter, was evidence to support the "directional theory of politics."

Also supportive of the directional theory were the results of the empirical analyses of the determinants of incumbent governors' vote shares and chances of reelection. In these cases, speech that contained a strong signal on the side of the political majority as defined by presidential voting again had a positive and significant relationship with public outcomes controlling for the impacts of variables shown within the context of other studies to have an influence on state-level election returns. The magnitude of this effect was .22 and I was also able to reject its null hypothesis with over 99% confidence. This relationship is denoted by the arrow marked "(6a)" in Figure 16 above. The substantive interpretation of the coefficient is that a one standard deviation change towards directionally preferred speech is associated with a 2.6 percentage point increase in incumbents' vote shares. The arrow marked "(6b)" is the impact of the "personal appeal" of governors as explained in greater detail in Chapter Six.[44] A further empirical analysis showed that delivery of speeches with strong partisan signals consistent with the political majority was associated with increased chances of reelection, although due to data restrictions it was not possible to convincingly rule out the alternative explanation that it was bipartisan speech patterns that were associated with greater electoral success.

Chapter Six also addressed, therefore, the question of whether governors could effectively adopt directionally-preferred speech even if the partisan signal in this speech ran counter to their own partisan identifications. Could Christine Todd Whitman appeal to the majority Democratic public of New Jersey, for example, using Democratic language in spite of the fact that she was a Republican? In spite of the concerns about the cognitive

[44] Running simultaneous "seemingly unrelated" regression equations (Zellner 1964) validates that the direct effect of directional speech on incumbent vote shares is robust to a check for correlation of errors between the equation predicting approval and that predicting vote shares. These equations are included in the technical appendix.

dissonance that this might create, the results of this analysis suggest that she could do so. Politicians can effectively adopt the language of the opposed party; in fact, the magnitude of the effect or directionally-preferred speech was stronger among "out-party" than among "in-party" governors.

Chapter Seven examined the connection between speech and policy in an analysis of the influence on electoral outcomes. Does speech merely describe policy orientation and is it therefore the channel through which information about policies influences elections? If so, this would maintain an important role for speech, but it would not be a role independent of policy outcomes in the states, Edelman's (1964) "achievement of a certain result." However, to the extent that policy orientation is captured within recommended and actual changes in general fund spending, speech is not correlated at all with policy. I explained the choice of these measures and reviewed some of their limitations in Chapter 7. The arrow marked "(7)" in Figure 16 above shows that governors recommendations are highly correlated with actual spending outcomes in the states, and I relied on the work of others to build that case that this implies that the governor has an important role in determining a state's overall level of spending. Nevertheless, none of these measures of recommended or actual spending had an impact either on public approval ratings of governors or on incumbents' vote shares or chances of reelection according to the testing of hypotheses operationalizing several different expectations of how state spending might influence elections. This is denoted in Figure 16 by the Xs through the lines connection policy and electoral outcomes.

One of the central findings of Chapter Seven was that directional speech partially masked the impact of changes in general fund spending that were consistent with the expectations of publics based on the partisan identifications of their governors. Without

controlling for speech, Democratic vote shares are higher in direct proportion to increases in general fund spending; Republicans, on the other hand, are rewarded for constraining the growth in government spending. The inclusion of directional speech in the model predicting incumbent vote shares, however, caused the variable operationalizing the partisan expectations for fiscal policy hypothesis to emerge as insignificant at conventional levels.

The Power of Words

Those who place emphasis on the value of political oratory highlight the important role that it plays in public leadership. Sometimes this political communication contains substantive policy content that influences the public agenda, bringing attention to issues that have been overlooked. The role for speech according to this account is in changing the way that listeners think, the way in which they prioritize, for example, the gravity of the challenges facing their state or nation. On a more fundamental level, speech so deployed has the ability to change people's conception of themselves and of the world around them.

The results of this study do not directly challenge or even cast doubt upon the possibility that speech can transform people's self-conceptions. However, the findings presented here show public leadership through speech in a slightly different light. According to this account, governors' successfully influence the public not by attempting to change people's minds but, instead, by relying on the manner in which their listeners already conceptualize the world to the extent that this worldview is codified in the charged political language of the national partisan dialogue. Governors enhance their public approval ratings, boost their vote shares and increase the likelihood that they will be elected by delivering strong signals consistent with the political orientation of the public majority in their states.

To a certain extent this is a banal conclusion: politicians must nurture an affective connection with the public through the use of appealing and popular language. There are, however, many aspects of the findings of this study that are not obvious and that add to our understanding of gubernatorial politics specifically and to the study of political communication and public leadership generally. First, I was able to analyze a set of speech data as complex as complex as 293 speeches delivered by 97 governors in 50 states over seven years using a tool as simple as Wordscores and a conceptual framework as parsimonious as the extent to which the word choices in these speeches mirrored those within national political platforms of the time. As such, this study has been an important validation of techniques of quantitative content analysis and suggests the usefulness of these tools for improving our understanding of the implications of speeches delivered by other political actors.

Many political science studies have relied on expert coding, for example, of the value cues within political articles in weekly periodicals, and these types of studies will remain vital methods of analyzing the more subtle components of texts. One advantage of computer-aided content analyses such as Wordscores, though, is that, particularly if they rely on a simple research design, they reduce the interpretive demands on the researcher. This can be useful to the extent that the estimations of researchers of what information within a text is salient and significant differ from those of the general public. In a world increasingly crowded with thousands of streams of information constantly vying for our attention, it may be only these simple signals that are received by the public. Therefore, the extent to which these tools simplify speech may be an advantage rather than a design flaw.

Discovering that political speech among governors has a marginal impact on their public fortunes over and above the influence of economics, campaign finances and national political factors such as presidential popularity is inherently notable. Perhaps more important, though, are the findings of this study pertaining to what sort of speech it is profitable for governors to adopt. Democratic governors in majority Republican states appear to be able to employ charged language associated with the other party without creating cognitive dissonance that causes voters to tune out their message. Though this study does not analyze the determinants of this dissonance directly, it is possible that charged partisan language does not trigger cognitive dissonance precisely because of the extent to which it can be deployed independent of governors' policy positions. The public of Wyoming may consider "Republican speech" not as uniquely Republican but rather "the way that we talk around here"; Democrat Dave Freudenthal's strong Republican signals, therefore, would decrease rather than increase dissonance as under this account his choice of words would make him sound like a typical leader of Wyoming rather than an atypical Democrat. One piece of evidence that suggests that this may be the case is that it is advantageous for governors to utilize "Republican language" even in states such as West Virginia that have a majority of Democratic identifiers.

One way in which it would be possible to get additional leverage on these questions would be to delve more deeply into the connection between partisanship and ideology as they manifest in speech. One major limitation of this study is that it relied on the fact that politics during this particular time period were largely unidimensional. I did not tease apart the extent to which the imperfect correlation of partisanship and ideology create higher dimensional environments particularly in states with large numbers of conservative

Democrats or liberal Republicans. Further work could use methods of analysis such as Wordscores to extract scales of ideological speech. It may be the case, for example, that the citizens of West Virginia do not object to the speech of Joe Manchin because it contains language that they associate with conservatism generally rather than with the Republican Party specifically; an affinity for conservatism, as a concept, may play a larger role in structuring the self-conception of most voters in this state whether they are Democrats or Republicans.

To say that governors must rely on rather than transform public self-conceptions within their speech in order to win reelection is not to say, though, that transformational leadership is not possible to some degree. Other studies confirming the stability of public ideology and policy outcomes in the American states suggest that governors are operating within contexts in which their ability is limited to radically reform the cultures and systems of their states. However, the lack of connection between changes in general fund spending and electoral outcomes – and, in particular, the extent to which the influence of spending is partially masked by directional speech – suggests that governors do have a certain amount of leeway. Public opinion liberalism, indices of public policy outcomes, and political culture can all remain relatively static within a state while allowing for a great deal of fluctuation in individual governmental programs, expansion of services or reductions of taxes, changes that will greatly influence people's lives.

Again, this study does not contain an adequately comprehensive account of governors' policy behaviors to claim that the use of charged partisan language masks important policy behaviors cutting the cord of accountability between governors and those they represent. Further, the partisan signal in speech does not mask the impact of any of the

other variables shown to be influential in determining governors' public fortunes. Governors are still held accountable for the direction of the state economy, and well financed challengers still represent a significant threat to the reelection prospects of incumbents. However, directionally-preferred speech does have an impact on public outcomes and this speech is entirely uncorrelated with at least one important policy behavior. Symbolic politics may not completely dominate substantive politics, therefore, but they do contribute to understanding electoral results. Further, this study underscores the extent to which national political conflict, and the language that codifies it, is relevant to understanding state level outcomes.

Conclusion

As noted in the first chapter of this dissertation, Dave Freudenthal opened his 2003 speech with a series of explicitly religious word choices that may have helped cast him as a Democrat who was atypically conversant in the language of faith that is generally associated with the national Republican Party. Though he opened his speech with and invocation, he closes it with an invitation that eschews charged partisan language to focus on building his relationship with his colleagues in the state legislature:

> "In closing, I would again thank you for allowing me to visit your chambers and speak with you. I would be honored to have any of you visit [my office on] the first floor. The coffee pot is generally on, although I make no guarantees as to the quality of its contents. I look forward to working with you in the coming months. May we always keep the well-being of Wyoming citizens foremost in our minds. Thank you."

Delivering speeches containing language that presents a clear political orientation that is appealing to the public majority is only one element that contributes to governors' political success. Partisan speech has an impact on public outcomes, but this effect may be

conditioned on the extent to which governors are working diligently, acting in a collegial manner and pushing hard to achieve their legislative agendas and other public goals. Governors' jobs are, after all, increasingly complex: they are managers of massive and growing public bureaucracies; they are called upon to be the heads both of their political parties and of all of the citizens of their states; they must understand and parse information from hundreds of advisers on dozens of different policy areas.

The demands upon state voters are not nearly as great, but the difficultly in processing so much information remains. Perhaps because of the increasingly complicated inner-workings of state governments – the tremendous level of knowledge necessary to truly understand and engage with all of the facets of public life – it is simple signals that emerge as the most effective. The signals quantified here are drawn from party platforms but they tap underlying dimensions as fundamental as the conception of government as a series of institutions or as a mechanism for respond to public problems, as basic as an individualist and collectivist orientation to life. As the world accelerates in complexity, the result may be that our public dialogue may become increasingly simple.

At least within the American states, constructing public addresses with language that appeals to the political majority is possible for governors regardless of their partisan identification and even, to a certain extent, independent of the substance of their policies. Word choices do not determine the content of public agendas, language cannot rationalize away the influence of an economic downturn or entirely blunt the damage caused by a public scandal. However, bold, directional stances staked out through language will contribute to governors' public success, even if making such politically savvy word choices is only one small part of governing successfully.

Appendix A: List of Speeches by State, Year and Governor

AK	2000	Tony Knowles
AK	2001	Tony Knowles
AK	2002	Tony Knowles
AK	2004	Frank Murkowski
AK	2005	Frank Murkowski
AK	2006	Frank Murkowski
AL	2000	Don Siegelman
AL	2001	Don Siegelman
AL	2002	Don Siegelman
AL	2003	Bob Riley
AL	2004	Bob Riley
AL	2005	Bob Riley
AL	2006	Bob Riley
AR	2001	Mike Huckabee
AR	2003	Mike Huckabee
AR	2005	Mike Huckabee
AZ	2000	Jan Dee Hull
AZ	2001	Jan Dee Hull
AZ	2002	Jan Dee Hull
AZ	2003	Janet Napolitano
AZ	2004	Janet Napolitano
AZ	2005	Janet Napolitano
AZ	2006	Janet Napolitano
CA	2000	Gray Davis
CA	2001	Gray Davis
CA	2002	Gray Davis
CA	2003	Gray Davis
CA	2004	Arnold Schwarzenegger
CA	2005	Arnold Schwarzenegger
CA	2006	Arnold Schwarzenegger
CO	2000	Bill Owens
CO	2001	Bill Owens
CO	2002	Bill Owens
CO	2003	Bill Owens
CO	2004	Bill Owens
CO	2005	Bill Owens
CO	2006	Bill Owens
CT	2000	John Rowland
CT	2001	John Rowland
CT	2003	John Rowland
CT	2004	John Rowland
CT	2005	M. Jodi Rell
CT	2006	M. Jodi Rell
DE	2000	Thomas Carper
DE	2001	Ruth Ann Minner
DE	2002	Ruth Ann Minner

DE	2003	Ruth Ann Minner
DE	2004	Ruth Ann Minner
DE	2005	Ruth Ann Minner
FL	2000	Jeb Bush
FL	2002	Jeb Bush
FL	2003	Jeb Bush
FL	2004	Jeb Bush
FL	2005	Jeb Bush
FL	2006	Jeb Bush
GA	2001	Roy Barnes
GA	2002	Roy Barnes
GA	2003	Sonny Perdue
GA	2004	Sonny Perdue
GA	2005	Sonny Perdue
GA	2006	Sonny Perdue
HI	2000	Ben Cayetano
HI	2001	Ben Cayetano
HI	2002	Ben Cayetano
HI	2003	Linda Lingle
HI	2004	Linda Lingle
HI	2005	Linda Lingle
HI	2006	Linda Lingle
IA	2000	Tom Vilsack
IA	2001	Tom Vilsack
IA	2002	Tom Vilsack
IA	2003	Tom Vilsack
IA	2004	Tom Vilsack
IA	2005	Tom Vilsack
IA	2006	Tom Vilsack
ID	2000	Dirk Kempthorne
ID	2001	Dirk Kempthorne
ID	2002	Dirk Kempthorne
ID	2003	Dirk Kempthorne
ID	2004	Dirk Kempthorne
ID	2005	Dirk Kempthorne
ID	2006	Dirk Kempthorne
IL	2000	George Ryan
IL	2001	George Ryan
IL	2002	George Ryan
IL	2003	Rod Blagojevich
IL	2004	Rod Blagojevich
IL	2005	Rod Blagojevich
IL	2006	Rod Blagojevich
IN	2000	Frank O'Bannon
IN	2001	Frank O'Bannon
IN	2002	Frank O'Bannon

IN	2003	Frank O'Bannon
IN	2004	Joseph Kernan
IN	2005	Mitch Daniels
IN	2006	Mitch Daniels
KS	2000	Bill Graves
KS	2001	Bill Graves
KS	2002	Bill Graves
KS	2003	Kathleen Sebelius
KS	2004	Kathleen Sebelius
KS	2005	Kathleen Sebelius
KS	2006	Kathleen Sebelius
KY	2000	Paul Patton
KY	2001	Paul Patton
KY	2002	Paul Patton
KY	2003	Paul Patton
KY	2004	Ernie Fletcher
KY	2005	Ernie Fletcher
KY	2006	Ernie Fletcher
LA	2000	Mike Foster
LA	2004	Kathleen Blanco
LA	2005	Kathleen Blanco
LA	2006	Kathleen Blanco
MA	2000	Paul Cellucci
MA	2001	Paul Cellucci
MA	2002	Jane Swift
MA	2003	Mitt Romney
MA	2004	Mitt Romney
MA	2005	Mitt Romney
MA	2006	Mitt Romney
MD	2000	Parris Glendening
MD	2001	Parris Glendening
MD	2002	Parris Glendening
MD	2003	Bob Ehrlich
MD	2004	Bob Ehrlich
MD	2005	Bob Ehrlich
ME	2000	Angus King
ME	2001	Angus King
ME	2002	Angus King
ME	2004	John Baldacci
ME	2005	John Baldacci
ME	2006	John Baldacci
MI	2001	John Engler
MI	2002	John Engler
MI	2003	Jennifer Granholm
MI	2004	Jennifer Granholm
MI	2005	Jennifer Granholm

MI	2006	Jennifer Granholm
MN	2001	Jesse Ventura
MN	2002	Jesse Ventura
MN	2003	Tim Pawlenty
MN	2004	Tim Pawlenty
MN	2005	Tim Pawlenty
MN	2006	Tim Pawlenty
MO	2000	Mel Carnahan
MO	2001	Bob Holden
MO	2002	Bob Holden
MO	2003	Bob Holden
MO	2004	Bob Holden
MO	2005	Matt Blunt
MO	2006	Matt Blunt
MS	2000	Ronnie Musgrove
MS	2001	Ronnie Musgrove
MS	2002	Ronnie Musgrove
MS	2003	Ronnie Musgrove
MS	2004	Haley Barbour
MS	2005	Haley Barbour
MS	2006	Haley Barbour
MT	2001	Judy Martz
MT	2003	Judy Martz
MT	2005	Brian Schweitzer
NC	2001	Mike Easley
NC	2003	Mike Easley
NC	2005	Mike Easley
ND	2001	John Hoeven
ND	2003	John Hoeven
ND	2004	John Hoeven
ND	2005	John Hoeven
NE	2000	Mike Johanns
NE	2001	Mike Johanns
NE	2002	Mike Johanns
NE	2003	Mike Johanns
NE	2004	Mike Johanns
NE	2005	Dave Heineman
NE	2006	Dave Heineman
NH	2000	Jeanne Shaheen
NH	2001	Jeanne Shaheen
NH	2005	John Lynch
NH	2006	John Lynch
NJ	2000	Christine Todd Whitman
NJ	2001	Christine Todd Whitman
NJ	2003	Frank McGreevey
NJ	2004	Frank McGreevey

NJ	2005	Richard Codey
NJ	2006	Richard Codey
NM	2001	Gary Johnson
NM	2002	Gary Johnson
NM	2003	Bill Richardson
NM	2004	Bill Richardson
NM	2005	Bill Richardson
NM	2006	Bill Richardson
NV	2001	Kenny Guinn
NV	2003	Kenny Guinn
NV	2005	Kenny Guinn
NY	2000	George Pataki
NY	2001	George Pataki
NY	2002	George Pataki
NY	2003	George Pataki
NY	2004	George Pataki
NY	2005	George Pataki
NY	2006	George Pataki
OH	2000	Bob Taft
OH	2001	Bob Taft
OH	2002	Bob Taft
OH	2003	Bob Taft
OH	2004	Bob Taft
OH	2005	Bob Taft
OH	2006	Bob Taft
OK	2000	Frank Keating
OK	2001	Frank Keating
OK	2002	Frank Keating
OK	2003	Brad Henry
OK	2004	Brad Henry
OK	2005	Brad Henry
OK	2006	Brad Henry
OR	2000	Kitzhaber
OR	2005	Kulongoski
OR	2006	Kulongoski
PA	2000	Tom Ridge
PA	2006	Ed Rendell
RI	2000	Lincoln Almond
RI	2001	Lincoln Almond
RI	2003	Donald Carcieri
RI	2004	Donald Carcieri
RI	2005	Donald Carcieri
RI	2006	Donald Carcieri
SC	2000	Jim Hodges
SC	2001	Jim Hodges
SC	2003	Mark Sanford

SC	2004	Mark Sanford
SC	2005	Mark Sanford
SC	2006	Mark Sanford
SD	2000	Bill Janklow
SD	2001	Bill Janklow
SD	2002	Bill Janklow
SD	2004	Mike Rounds
SD	2005	Mike Rounds
SD	2006	Mike Rounds
TN	2000	Don Sundquist
TN	2001	Don Sundquist
TN	2002	Don Sundquist
TN	2005	Phil Bredesen
TN	2006	Phil Bredesen
TX	2001	Rick Perry
TX	2003	Rick Perry
TX	2005	Rick Perry
UT	2000	Mike Leavitt
UT	2001	Mike Leavitt
UT	2003	Mike Leavitt
UT	2004	Olene Walker
UT	2005	Jon Huntsman
UT	2006	Jon Huntsman
VA	2000	Jim Gilmore
VA	2001	Jim Gilmore
VA	2002	Mark Warner
VA	2003	Mark Warner
VA	2004	Mark Warner
VA	2005	Mark Warner
VA	2006	Tim Kaine
VT	2000	Howard Dean
VT	2001	Howard Dean
VT	2002	Howard Dean
VT	2003	Jim Douglas
VT	2004	Jim Douglas
VT	2005	Jim Douglas
VT	2006	Jim Douglas
WA	2000	Gary Locke
WA	2001	Gary Locke
WA	2002	Gary Locke
WA	2003	Gary Locke
WA	2004	Gary Locke
WA	2005	Chris Gregoire
WA	2006	Chris Gregoire
WI	2000	Tommy Thompson
WI	2001	Scott McCallum

WI	2002	Scott McCallum
WI	2003	Jim Doyle
WI	2004	Jim Doyle
WI	2005	Jim Doyle
WI	2006	Jim Doyle
WV	2000	Cecil Underwood
WV	2001	Bob Wise
WV	2002	Bob Wise
WV	2003	Bob Wise
WV	2004	Bob Wise
WV	2005	Joe Manchin
WV	2006	Joe Manchin
WY	2000	Jim Geringer
WY	2001	Jim Geringer
WY	2003	Dave Freudenthal
WY	2004	Dave Freudenthal
WY	2005	Dave Freudenthal

Appendix B: Full Text of Two State of the State Speeches

Republican Governor Mike Johanns of Nebraska
State of the State Speech, 2000

(2nd strongest Republican signal among 293 speeches in dataset; strongest Republican signal of speeches delivered by Republicans)

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Members of the Legislature, distinguished guests, friends, and fellow Nebraskans: One year ago, I came before you to present my first State of the State Address. I shared with you a blueprint for implementing a vision of less government, lower taxes, protecting our families, and building our economy. Together, we advanced that vision.

While addressing a wide variety of issues important to Nebraskans and important to the future of our State, our common focus remained on that four point agenda.

More specifically, the budget we agreed on was based on the principles of spending restraint, funding our priorities, and providing tax relief.

We achieved the most conservative spending growth in our state's budget in a decade, a renewed commitment to providing services that ensure a continued quality of life for our citizens, and provided more than $105 million dollars in tax relief measures.

I am proud of that first year effort and grateful for the partnership that we developed during my first year in office.

Today, I am presenting my legislative initiatives and recommendations for mid-biennium adjustments to the 1999-2001 biennial budget. With this legislation, and these budget adjustments, I continue to emphasize the priorities of lower taxes, less government, building Nebraska's economy, and protecting our families, with an added focus on initiatives which will help ensure the health, safety, and success of our children.

Starting with lower taxes, I am proposing that we repeat the $30 million dollar community college aid that resulted in dollar for dollar property tax relief in 1999. Coupled with the $35 million dollar tax credit already approved for this year, property taxpayers including the farmer in West Point, the homeowner in Bellevue, the business woman in Lincoln, and the rancher in Cheyenne County would benefit from $65 million dollars in direct property tax relief this year.

I also propose that we hold to our commitment to allocate over-appropriated funds in the state aid to education formula to the following year's school aid. This issue was debated extensively when LB 149 and LB 881 were considered by this body a year ago. I believe that policy decision was the right thing to do especially considering the coming school tax levy drop and the commitment of the Unicameral to substitute state funds for lost property tax revenues.

The additional $30 million dollars in community college aid and the reappropriation of an estimated $34 million in school aid is a strong commitment to property tax relief, funding education, and maintaining the budget agreement we made a year ago.

It is an appropriate point in my comments to commend the Legislature for your collective commitment to property tax relief. Few issues are as complex and as difficult as this issue.

If we provide another year of community college aid, in addition to the direct credit and the school levy drop, a total of $155 million in state resources will have been dedicated to property tax relief. That is in addition to the areas where the cost of services were transferred from local to State government--such as Medicaid, municipal courts, and property tax assessment. And in addition to those changes, today, approximately 38 percent, or 888 million of the State general fund budget, in one form or another, is provided as State aid to local governments to help lower property taxes.

The plan I have offered fits within your ongoing commitment to be a partner in the property tax relief effort. I ask you to adopt the property tax plan I have placed before you and then let's continue our efforts in this area as we look to the future.

I pledge that my door will always be open to visit with you or any Nebraskan about an idea or proposal you have for property tax relief. Our common search for new ways to help homeowners, farmers, ranchers, and all those who feel the burden of property tax continues.

Now let me turn my attention to a more efficient state government a government more responsive to the needs of our citizens.

Along with your Natural Resources Committee, I am proposing the merger of the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Water Resources. I ask you to approve this merger because it is good public policy to incorporate the functions of these two agencies into a single agency. We expect this merger will improve service and coordination of resources, eliminate confusion over which agency sets what water policy, and cause efficiencies and savings in future years. In this budget recommendation, I propose that these agencies absorb the estimated cost of the merger.

Now allow me to focus on our state's economy. It is the state of our overall economy that has drawn my attention and the attention of many of you.

On the surface, the State's economy is solid and sound. But we must ask ourselves does that same condition exist in all 93 Nebraska counties?

The economy in our metropolitan areas and larger counties is experiencing growth we can all be extremely proud of. The economic engine is working and driving the general indicators of prosperity in our State.

But the economy in our rural areas and more sparsely populated counties has been adversely impacted by the crisis that has afflicted the agriculture economy. Many parts of our state need our help in diversifying their local economy in addition to a boost for agriculture.

The problems caused by a lack of diversification in the rural economy coupled with low commodity prices will take time to overcome and will require a comprehensive approach.

Nebraska definitely is confronted by a two-track economy. If we accomplish one thing this session, it should be to balance economic opportunity from east to west and north to south in our State. I believe the "Rural Economic Opportunities Act" will do exactly that.

I want to thank Senator Jerry Matzke for leading this legislative initiative. And I also want to thank the thirty-four co-sponsors of this important legislation. This economic development tool will fill in the gap so-to-speak and encourage job creation and capital investment in Nebraska's small and mid-size counties. Industries that could qualify under this tax incentive plan include manufacturing, warehousing, transportation, research and development, insurance, data processing, or telecommunications.

Another key area of economic development that this proposal is meant to encourage is value-added agriculture. We have the land, the crops, the animals, and the people to make value-added agriculture an even bigger component of our economy. The result will be greater demand for raw commodities and an increased share of the consumer dollar for Nebraska's farmers and ranchers. In other words, increased income and increased profitability for agriculture producers who have been struggling in the face of historic or near historic low commodity prices.

As a much-needed boost for value-added agriculture, I am proposing more than $1 million dollars in increased support for value-added activity in the Department of Economic Development and the Department of Agriculture. These additional funds which would come from reallocated resources within the departments, increased general fund support, and a partnership with industry groups will take the Nebraska Value-Added Agriculture Initiative to another level of success.

An emphasis on property tax relief, value-added agriculture, and encouraging economic opportunity in rural Nebraska is in my judgment good for the entire state. Harnessing the economic potential of all Nebraskans will ensure a strong foundation for an optimistic future.

As we strive to build a stronger and more diversified statewide economy, I also turn your attention to the need to protect our families. An important component of that priority is public safety. I have already identified priorities in this area.

First, adopting lethal injection as the method of carrying out a sentence in capital cases.

Second, reform of the post conviction appeals process. The present system of unlimited appeals has caused many Nebraskans to lose faith in the effectiveness of the criminal justice system. I urge you to reform post-conviction appeals this session.

Third, I am proposing to add twelve state troopers, six of them to be deployed for community policing services and six troopers to work in the area of highway safety.

Fourth, I am proposing conversion of the Law Enforcement Training Center in Grand Island to an open enrollment, tuition-based law enforcement certification training program. Basic pre-certification training would be completed at community colleges or other educational institutions prior to enrollment and completion of the basic law enforcement training program. The program will reduce salary training costs at the local level while providing an available pool of qualified and trained applicants to refill law enforcement vacancies on a more timely basis.

Fifth, I am proposing additional funds to upgrade the Criminal Justice Information Systems, giving law enforcement greater access to more criminal information and history.

As an addition to these measures, I am identifying one other priority in the area of public safety. I am proposing to convert carrier enforcement officers to state troopers. I am proposing that this be done in a way that places no additional burden on gasoline tax revenues with a commitment that these troopers will devote their full time to carrier enforcement duties. This proposal is submitted for your consideration due to the retention issues we are facing with the current system. The continuous turnover of carrier enforcement personnel is making it extremely difficult to maintain the integrity of carrier enforcement efforts.

I ask for your support of these criminal justice initiatives.

My final comments in this message address our State's most important asset -- our children.

In the past year, I have championed childhood immunizations, sought to ensure access to health insurance for children in low income families, encouraged adoption, promoted reading to children, sought solutions to the affordability and accessibility of quality child care, supported mentoring of at-risk children, visited schools and talked to students of all ages, toured the Youth Rehabilitation and Training Centers at Kearney and Geneva, co-sponsored the youth violence summit held last summer, appointed a blue ribbon panel of experts to review the state's infant mortality rate, and sought improvements in our State's juvenile justice system.

The health, safety, and development of Nebraska's children is a high priority for my administration. Accordingly, my budget recommendations include a number of investments to secure a better future for our children. Adjustments include additional dollars for child care, child welfare services, and adoption assistance for families willing to provide caring homes for children eligible for adoption.

As an outgrowth of the recently completed Juvenile Facilities Master Plan, I am recommending that either an existing facility be renovated or a new building be built to house a Parole Revocation program. In addition, operating funds are provided to begin a Wilderness Camp program for juvenile offenders. Both of these efforts address overcrowding

at the Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Centers and will allow current staff to more effectively treat the youth who are properly committed at those facilities for care.

I am also proposing the continuation of a pilot program called the Learning Extensions program created through a partnership with Omaha Public Schools and Omaha Together One Community and the Nebraska Health and Human Services System. The goal is to increase parental involvement and thereby improve the child's academic performance.

In my budget modification, I add nearly $28 million dollars to cover child care expansions that occurred without your approval and before I came to office. Please be assured of my disapproval of the practice of making administrative expansion of programs that involve fundamental policy issues without authorization by this body. I can, and will, address some administrative issues that will make the child care program more sensible. But, together, we must engage in a policy debate to decide an appropriate level of benefits that ensures fiscal stability for this program and that provides a benefit for those Nebraskans truly in need.

As a state, we continue to experience more children being placed into state custody. Therefore, an additional $11 million is sought to cover this cost. We will initiate an all out effort to secure federal matching funds to lessen the impact on the general fund. Additional funds are also being set aside to finance Kids Connection to be sure that children in low income families have adequate health care.

Further, I am asking that you pass LB 482 which provides adoption assistance for families who adopt state wards our goal must be to provide a permanent family for each child in our custody who is ready for adoption.

I am also putting funds in the budget for an additional Foster Care Review Board Specialist to monitor the placement of children in out of home care. I set aside funding necessary to establish the State Disbursement Unit for child support payments as required by federal law. And I have proposed legislation to implement a School-to-Career program and to provide new support for youth mentoring.

Finally, I am announcing that I have directed the Lieutenant Governor and the Health and Human Services Policy Secretary to form a team to address the question of what we can do as a State to ensure that every child in Nebraska is healthy, safe, and successful. This team will review the entire system of State services for children and recommend how we can better focus our resources to meet the needs of our children.

In addition, the Lieutenant Governor will lead a partnership between the State Department of Education and the Health and Human Services System on early childhood care and education issues. The partnership's focus will be to implement the Business Council on Child Care Financing's recommendation to coordinate, consolidate, or eliminate multiple and duplicate commissions and boards for the purpose of efficiently administering, managing and monitoring early childhood care and education in Nebraska.

Without a close second, the emphasis of this message has been upon the health, safety, and success of our children. The funds I am seeking and the initiatives I have proposed are important and in my judgment a sound investment for our long-term future.

A year ago I delivered my first State of the State message. I told you that we could and must work together for our great state. I repeat that message today.

Working together we unite Nebraska as we advance a vision which benefits all of our citizens; a vision of less government, lower taxes, building our economy, protecting our families, and advancing the health, safety, and success of our children. Thank you

--

Democratic Governor Don Siegelman of Alabama
State of the State Speech 2002

(Strongest Democratic Signal of 293 speeches in dataset)

Three years ago, I promised to make Alabama the Education State. Since I took the oath of office, I have spent every day fighting to improve our schools. And I will not stop fighting... not now, not ever.

We've made some real progress over the last three years, but those accomplishments were stifled last year when our constitution forced school cuts for the fourteenth time in 50 years.

But this year, when we faced more cuts, I took a stand and said no more, no more cuts to our schools, no matter what. And three weeks ago, for the first time in history, we stopped proration dead in its tracks and stopped our schools from getting worse.

Now it's time to fight on, and make them better.

There's one thing I've learned over the last three years. There are forces in this state fighting us each and every day, every step of the way -- powerful forces, with powerful friends, fighting to put their narrow special interests ahead of the people's best interests.

Since 1901, our constitution has enshrined their power, but I'm here tonight to let you know that I will fight them every step of the way, fight for our families, fight for our children, fight for our schools.

I will fight to reform our constitution, take power away from the special interests, and give it back to the people. The people and I will fight because we are right, and the special interests are wrong.

We fight for education. They settle for proration. We are right, and they are wrong.

We fight to make things better. They settle for things not getting worse. We are right, and they are wrong.

We fight for change. They settle for more of the same. We are right, and they are wrong.

I believe that every child in Alabama, regardless of where they're born or to whom, regardless of the color of their skin, whether they're rich or poor, every child in Alabama should have the chance to reach their God-given potential through education.

I believe that the right to education begins with early learning opportunities so that every child gets off to a healthy start and is ready, prepared and excited to learn; and I will always believe that every Alabama child who stays in school, stays out of trouble, and makes their grades has earned the right to go to college tuition free.

I believe that every Alabamian should expect a good job with good wages, jobs that are challenging enough to keep our children in Alabama, our families together, and jobs that pay enough to give Alabama families the hope and dream of a higher quality of life.

I believe we owe a debt to our seniors, who built this great state and gave us a chance at life. I believe our families should be able to feel safe in their homes and in their communities.

This is a dream I have for Alabama, and I say why not?

Alabama kids deserve an education that's second to none. So why not give them one? Why not? Because our constitution keeps the special interests in charge. Our Constitution perpetuates a system where every step forward means a fight, where every bold dream is dismissed as wishful thinking.

While Alabama families and most Alabama businesses pay their fair share to support our schools, we've got a constitution where large out-of-state corporations that make the most, pay the least, and those people who have the least, pay the most.

As a result, our schools don't have the resources they need. Our constitution ensures that our schools and our children are the first to get hurt, and when we cut our schools, all of our progress is put on hold.

Now I've been the most pro-business governor, and we've run the most pro-business administration in Alabama's history. All we're asking is for simple fairness. All we're asking, is that these big corporations, that don't pay their fair share, pitch in and support our school children.

So why not reform our constitution? Well, the special interest lobby machine is no doubt cranking up right now to tell you why not... to trick you into believing that what's good for them is somehow good for you, and let me tell you, they're good at it. They've been doing it for a hundred years.

They'll tell Alabama families that it's in their interest to keep power centralized in Montgomery, and away from the people. The powerful special interests will claim that the lack of money in our schools is somebody else's fault – anybody else's fault, but their own.

Well, I'm here to tell you that it is their fault. It's not right, and we must make it right no matter what it takes, no matter how long it takes. We will fight, and we will win. We will reform our outdated constitution, take the power out of Montgomery and give it back to the people, so that we can finally give our children the education they need and deserve.

Alabama families are counting on us. Alabama's school children are counting on us. Alabama's future depends on us.

Let's take a look at the state of our schools. I am proud to say that, despite the hardships, despite the lack of resources, our students are learning more and achieving more than ever before.

Our superintendents are managing our schools carefully, making sure their limited resources go directly to the classroom. With tenure eliminated, our principals are held accountable for school performance.

We have set high standards for our teachers, and our teachers have met the challenge. We've gone from the bottom to the top eight states in the nation in the number of National Board Certified teachers, and beginning this year, for the first time in 20 years, we'll begin testing our teachers again. And all new school employees, including teachers, are now subject to the toughest national criminal background check.

Working with leaders from Alabama's business community, we wrote a model plan for early learning and opened 35 new early learning sites. By the end of this year, there will be one in every county.

We're building more and better schools in which to teach and learn. We've reduced class sizes in the most critical grades, and by the end of this year, nearly 90 percent of all portable classrooms will be gone from our schoolyards.

You know one thing is for certain. Our students work hard. They work hard, because that's what their Alabama values teach them to do. Even during these tough times, the results are clear. Test scores are at an all-time high, and drop-out rates are at an all time low.

Our students are meeting tougher standards. Alabama is the only state in the nation that requires its high school students to take and pass the four most critical courses, four years in a row, and pass them all in order to graduate, and our colleges and universities are preparing our students to meet the job demands of the 21st Century.

But our progress extends beyond our schools.

When it comes to recruiting high paying jobs for working families, no state can compete with Alabama. Mercedes, Honda, Toyota, Boeing, IPSCO Steel, Navistar, Lockheed Martin, and many more are on the way. In the past few years, even while the economy has suffered, we've created more than 65,000 new jobs, and attracted more than $10 billion in new business investments.

Under my leadership, Alabama is investing in its own research sector ... With the national center for space, science technology at UAH, a new national medical research center at UAB, cancer research at the University of South Alabama and automotive research and design to be centered at Ft. McClellan in Anniston, in association with Auburn University.

We've initiated the largest road and bridge construction project in the last 50 years.

Together, we're making Alabama's communities safer. For the first time in 18 years, we've toughened child-care standards, and now we've raised standards for those who give care to our seniors. This year we graduated our first new state trooper class in 4 years. And we've cracked down on drunk driving, domestic violence and deadbeat parents.

These are all important strides forward, and creative changes that are impacting Alabama, but let no one in this chamber, or in this state be lured into thinking that our progress is anywhere close to where it could be.

In Alabama today, in some schools, there aren't enough textbooks, so the students have to share during the day, and they can't take them home at night. Students have to sell candy and magazines to buy schools supplies. There's no money for computer labs or new books for libraries, much less money for college scholarships or universal access to early learning opportunities.

In the last special session, I fought against proration and for the first time in Alabama history, we prevented cuts to our schools, but we still have a constitution that centralizes power in the hands of a few special interests, and blocks progress.

If anyone here needs proof that the special interests are in charge, take a look at the last legislative session. I proposed to close corporate tax loopholes and make giant, out-of-state corporations finally pay their fair share to support our schools.

They refused. The special interest had another idea: a tax on you. I vetoed their tax, but you know what? The special interest got a tax on your telephones, a tax that will make millions of you pay millions more, a step backward in tax fairness.

You know what I learned? I learned that if we ever want to fund our schools the way we should, if we ever want to make our tax system fair, we have to rip the power out of the hands of the special interests, get it out of Montgomery and give it back to the people.

And we do that in two ways. First, with a constitutional convention that puts the people in charge. And second, by giving the people more control over their local schools. So, I am

challenging you: Stand up to the special interests. Stand up for Alabama families. Stand up for Alabama schools.

Take Alabama back. Now is the time. So tonight, I challenge you to put a call for a constitutional convention on the ballot in November. This fight will not be easy, but I will not stop.

I will fight to let the people vote on whether they want a constitutional convention, fight so the people can make their own decisions about education in their local community, and I will fight so that the people don't have to bow and scrape to the special interests here in Montgomery.

And when a new constitution is complete, we will make sure that you, the people of Alabama, have the last word, that you have the right to vote on it. To the Legislature, I say, trust the people who have trusted you.

Alabama is at a crossroads, and we all have a choice. We can keep doing the same old things the same old way, or we can fight for a new beginning. I choose to fight.

And while we fight for a new constitution, I challenge you to put an amendment on the ballot in November that gives local communities the constitutional authority to decide what's best for their own local schools. Our outdated Constitution forces local communities, to come to Montgomery hat in hand, to beg the Legislature and the special interests just to have the right to vote on whether they can make changes in their local schools. This system didn't make sense in 1901, much less in 2002, over a hundred years later. Enough is enough.

It's not only our schools that need help. Our families, during these tough economic times, need a helping hand as well. So I ask you to end the practice of predatory lending, so that our families have a chance to get back on their feet. And I will offer a new incentive to businesses coming into Alabama... to use Alabama contractors, Alabama products, and Alabama workers.

Next, I ask you to show respect to the men and women who serve in the Alabama National Guard. Alabamians who leave us to serve in the Guard should have their families protected and their jobs guaranteed when they come home. I urge you: extend to the Alabama Guard the protections the federal government gives to every member of the armed services.

For our seniors, I ask you to pass a most important initiative. Too many of our seniors are forced to choose between medicine and food, while the big drug companies continue to raise their prices. It's wrong, and it must be stopped.

Congressional leaders promised help, but they failed to deliver on a prescription drug benefit program. I'm not waiting any longer. During this session, we will create a prescription drug program that will lower the cost of drugs for Alabama seniors.

One responsibility that remains constant is our obligation to ensure that Alabama families are kept safe. I ask you to pass my crime package that will ensure: that violent offenders serve their entire sentence, that juvenile thugs serve adult time, that repeat adult sexual predators who violently rape or violently sodomize a child are subject to the death penalty.

And I demand that you give new rights to victims and toughen punishment for the most cowardly act of all, domestic violence.

Finally, while September 11th will forever be seared into our memories, we need to ensure security here at home. Tonight I propose the toughest measures, including the death penalty, for those who commit terrorist acts in Alabama.

My friends, these are real priorities that value our heritage and honor our values. Good schools, a first rate education. A helping hand for working families. A prescription drug benefit program for our seniors, and tough laws that keep our families safe.

But what is most important is a commitment from you to stand up to the special interests and stand up for the school children of Alabama. It's time we fulfill our dreams to give our children the opportunity to reach their God given potential through education. It's time we fulfill our dreams to give our children an education that is second to none. It's time we fulfill our dreams of giving every child an early learning opportunity and every student a chance to go to college.

It's time we end the special interest domination that has ruled our state and held us back for over a hundred years. It's time we throw them out, and give the power back to the people.

It's time we reform our constitution so that we can finally give our school children the education they deserve and the quality jobs that they need.

I know where I stand. The question is, where will you stand? With the people or with the special interests? With us or with them? Alabama families await your answer, and, so do I.

So tonight, I ask you once again to stand up with me and fight.

Stand up and for Alabama school children. Stand up and for Alabama families. Stand up and for Alabama's future. I believe with your help, and with God's blessings, we can take the great state of Alabama and make it even better.

Thank you, good night and God bless the great state of Alabama.

Appendix C: Additional Regression Equations

Table C1: The Impact of Partisan Speech and Fiscal Policy on Gubernatorial Public Approval Ratings, 2000-2006

	+/-	Directional	Proximity	Bipartisan
Partisan Signal				
Directional Speech	+	.248 ***	-	-
		(.099)		
Proximity Speech	+	-	-.013	-
			(.160)	
Bipartisan Speech	+	-	-	.013
				(.124)
Economy				
National Unemployment (%, t-1)	-	-.552	-.454	-.462
		(1.01)	(1.06)	(1.06)
Relative Unemployment (%, t-1)	-	-4.68 ***	-4.24 ***	-4.22 ***
		(.888)	(.906)	(.978)
Other Political Variables				
Party (1=Democrat)	+/-	-1.41	-1.45	-1.46
		(1.04)	(1.05)	(1.04)
Year in Term	-	-.200	-.290	-.301
		(.349)	(.353)	(.358)
Presidential Approval (% t-1, complement for opposite party)	+	-.007	-.021	-.019
		(.052)	(.054)	(.053)
Scandal (Categorical, 1 = Scandal)	-	-19.7 ***	-19.4 ***	-19.4 ***
		(2.67)	(2.73)	(2.72)
Southern Democrat (Categorical, 1 = South)	+/-	6.49 ***	4.04 *	4.04 *
		(2.43)	(2.22)	(2.24)
Constant		55.8 ***	57.1 ***	57.1 ***
		(6.30)	(6.63)	(6.67)
N		293	293	293
R2		.38	.35	.34

Notes: OLS, robust standard errors clustered by governor in parentheses; * p<.05, **p<.01, *** p<.001; unit of analysis is one year of each governor's term.

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